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THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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DR. CHARLES GILMORE MAPHIS

Whose vision, industry and personality have made the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia a reality

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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EDITED BY

HENRY W. McLAUGHLIN

DIRECTOR OF COUNTRY CHURCH WORK, PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH, U. S. AUTHOR OF "THE NEW CALL,"
"CHRIST AND THE COUNTRY PEOPLE," ETC.

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PREFACE

The Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia was founded in 1927, to provide a forum in which domestic problems affecting the growth and development of the United States might be impartially discussed, in a broad and competent fashion, by men charged with the task of public administration and by those who are actively engaged in public affairs. The programs have been limited primarily to a study and discussion of governmental problems of national, state and local concern, and to the economic and social conditions underlying them. An effort has always been made to select for discussion those questions which are of immediate concern and interest to the American people.

The approach to the several problems considered in the eight Round Tables of the Institute, from the very nature of the undertaking, must be of a popular nature. In view of this fact, it has been the hope of the directors for the past two years that at least certain of the Round Tables be planned with the idea of well-organized volumes constituting one of the valuable results. A greatly enlarged national and international audience would be effectively reached in this manner. This hope has been realized in part as evidenced by this book, which is a companion volume to two others resulting from the 1929 session of the Institute.

The twenty chapters in this volume are the outgrowth of the Open Forum and Round Table studies and discussions on "The Task of the Country Church" in the 1929 Institute of Public Affairs. The editor, Dr. Henry W. McLaughlin, Director of the Country Church Department of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, was the leader and will have charge of a similar Round Table at the Institute in 1930.

It is the wish of those in charge of the Institute to thank all the participants for their splendid coöperation, as well as the leaders and secretaries of the respective Round Tables, since but for their help these volumes would not have come into being.

THE INTRODUCTION

No idea can be perfected except upon the anvil of debate.
—President Herbert Hoover, Nov. 11, 1929.

The Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, which met August 4 to 17, 1929, considered The Task of the Country Church of such vital importance that it was made the topic for one of its Round Tables. This book is the result. Each chapter was carefully prepared before the meeting of the Institute and has been revised and re-revised, after having been submitted to the judgment of an intelligent group of interested people. This is more than a book. It is a library on the subject of the Country Church and national affairs.

The ideas set forth are not necessarily those of the editor; they cannot be, for the writers do not all agree among themselves. Each author is responsible for his own attitude. It is a challenge to the reader to do his own thinking. He is not to act like a young robin with more mouth than brains, which swallows without question all that is presented. He is invited to examine with judicial care the evidence of the various witnesses and reach his own conclusions.

The economic well-being of the farmer is vital to the best interests of every other class. Even more, his social and religious welfare should be of concern to all who are interested in the stability of the nation. These are bound up with the proper development of the school and the church. Good rural schools are a necessity. The country churches are not of less importance. My personal opinion is that they are more vital to the national welfare.

A comparatively small group of people had the privilege of attending the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia. All our readers are admitted to the fellowship and privilege of the 1929 Institute. While you peruse these pages, sit with us in imagination at the Round Table on the Country Church.

THE EDITOR.

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PART I

NATION

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills (Psalm 121).

IF you have come from the south or from the east toward Charlottesville, there was a moment when at some turn of the advancing road or at some curve of the speeding train, you caught the first far glimpse of the mountains. Suddenly you saw them, lifted above the plains, like a high blue rim of the earth climbing to meet the sky. Then perhaps you felt again that age-old leap of the spirit which the psalmist felt long ago when he said: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." For the sight of the hills is full of beautiful suggestion. On the crest of the hills will be reflected the first light of the day when the dawn breaks across the horizon. On the hills will linger the last glory of the sunset as the day goes down. The hills may still be clear when the fog lies heavy in the valleys; and it is upon the hills that you climb when you want to see the far perspectives of the earth. If you have lived in sight of the mountains, you are restless in any other place. You would be homesick for them in the prairies. The monotony of flat places would depress you. And even if you must live out of sight of them for a time, you are thankful to know that they continue to exist, and that presently you may come back and feel again the inspiration of their high beauty climbing toward the sky.

In the same way there is a hill-country of religion, to which we lift our eyes. There are heights of spiritual suggestion from which we draw our strength. Without this lifting up of our inner eyes, life may become a thing of sand-flats and of marshes. With it, all that we think and do may have a loftier meaning.

Our consideration is for a better organization of rural life; the question of crime and a better administration of the law; the possibility of destroying militarism and organizing peace; questions economic and political, which require the best wisdom of our world for their solution. But they require something else also. They call for a wisdom which comes from above, and for a motive and a stimulus which only religion can fully give.

I know there may be some of you who question that. You may think of religion as a meddling interference of contentious sects. You may think of it as a quarreling over dogmatic prejudice which hampers the freedom that would find the truth. And there may be others of you who believe in religion generally, but who wonder what place it has as a prelude to an Institute of Public Affairs. It is all very well to say that we need religion in the working out of our contemporary problems, but *how* do we need it, and what particular value does it bring? These are fair questions.

To begin with, I must answer the question which underlies the others. What *is* religion? What are we talking about when we use this word together?

By religion I mean the conscious bond between the spirit of a man and that Spirit, intelligent and loving, whom he believes to be the ultimate Reality in this universe. That is religion, broadly speaking. In every country and in every time, men have had glimmerings of religion like that. But religion is best understood in its supreme expressions, and to me the supreme expression is Jesus. I speak now not in any narrow exclusiveness, for I believe that there are many gateways through which men have drawn near to God. But I believe that in Jesus we have the widest gateway and the straightest road. Frankly, therefore, when I speak of religion, I mean the religion which he lived and taught and made compelling. I mean the kind of relationship he had with the God he believed in and the God he has taught us to understand.

The Dignity of Human Life

Understood thus, religion is needed in our public affairs because, in the first place, it helps us to believe that life means something big enough for us to be in earnest about.

Public affairs, as well as private affairs, are worth bothering about only because they concern people. There is no sense in the farm question except as it concerns people who live on the farms. There is no sense in questions of crime and law-enforcement except as these concern people who must be protected from what the criminals do. There is no sense in peace societies and other propaganda against war except as back of plans and paper programs their thought is always of people—the people of to-day and of to-morrow who must be saved from destruction, into life.

But what are people? And what are they worth? Is a man nothing but a cleverly developed animal? Is he merely an accidental outcome of a few chemicals, a little phosphorus and lime and salts and water which in their several parts might be bought for a dollar or so? Is he the poor fish and hopeless fool which some of our mordant present-day writers consider all the world to be—except themselves? Is he the "Boobus Americanus" and the great lout generally who is presented to us by Mr. H. L. Mencken and his kind? Or is a man something more than these cheapening estimates would have us believe? Is there in him the dignity of a divine lineage, and is he understood truly only when he is thought of as a son of the Most High God?

I submit that it makes a difference which of these attitudes we adopt. There is no motive for creative effort in the one: there is infinite motive in the other. The movements for human betterment which have starred the history of this past century would never have been launched if all men had had the sneering estimate of human value which some affect to-day. American history would indeed have been "An American Tragedy" if we had had no higher interpreters to listen to than Theodore Dreiser. Would the pessimism, sometimes flippant and sometimes bitter, which has been the fashion in contemporary literature ever have inspired the crusades which gradually have humanized industry, taken women and children out of coal mines, reformed the hideous cruelties of the old insane asylums and the prisons, created the juvenile courts, and built the thousand other institutions by which the possibilities of the weakest and the lowest have been given their chance to grow? To ask the question is to see the answer. Imagine the great lovers and servants of mankind created by the smart sneers of the despisers! Imagine William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury, imagine Washington at Valley Forge, and Lee at Appomattox and Lexington, and Woodrow Wilson giving his very life on behalf of his vision of world coöperation, if instead of the Bible, the *American Mercury* had been the only thing they knew!

You cannot long work for man nor put any heart into human service, unless you believe in the greatness of humanity—not its present greatness, but its potential greatness, because it is seen as illumined by its relationship to God. The power to begin and to continue the practical helpfulness which this world needs depends upon pity and compassion and faith, and these will never grow from the sour ground of cynicism and contempt. Real religion recreates faith in the possibilities of men because of its faith in the unwearying love of God. It remembers the words of Jesus: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." In every man—that is to say—there is a spark of Christhood, hidden and imprisoned, but wanting to be set free; and because of that dim but real divineness in the poorest human nature, it is worth working for and being patient with, till God's work is made complete.

Now I know, of course, that some may question this need of religion as a motive in human effort. Many of the ablest workers in all kinds of agencies for social betterment are people of no professed religion, you will say. That is true. But it is also true that many who do not call themselves religious, because of their scorn for the abominable sectarian wranglings which they have imagined to be religion, are nevertheless religious at heart; and it is further true that many who have no personal religion have inherited the impulse which religion originally created. The spirit of Jesus Christ and his estimate of God and of man have given to our Western civilization an instinctive consciousness by which every individual is affected; and if the religious origins of that consciousness were ever destroyed, the whole level of our social faith and action would be lowered. The great changes come, not dramatically, but slowly and unperceived. Once a large part of our American continent was covered by the glaciers, and conceivably the glaciers may return. It is estimated that a relatively small continuous drop in temperature would bring the ice sheet back. Each year the snows would be deeper, each year the ice cap would creep a little farther south from the Arctic and new glaciers would form among the higher mountains, until at last the fertile plains would be buried again under the white death. So would it be in the wide field of our moral and spiritual living if the religion which is expressed by the name of Jesus faded from men's hearts. The gentleness and compassion which made human service possible would be killed beneath the frigid touch of a creeping indifference. The finest flowers of human conduct, like the flowers in the gardens, depend upon the climate which gives them warmth enough to grow. Religion produces that climate. It puts the sun of a heavenly kindness in the sky, and it lifts the great assurances of God as the Alps are lifted above Italy, to bar back the north winds of discouragement and defeat, and to let life expand beneath their great protection.

THE MEANING OF IMPROVEMENT

We pass on to another reason why religion is important in an age concerned with social striving.

It is important, in the first place—as we have seen, because it helps us to be sure that human life is worth taking seriously, worth working for, and worth improving. It is important, in the second place, because it teaches us what improvement means. It keeps our sense of values true. Out of the clamor and confusion of shifting standards, we lift our eyes to the eternal steadiness of the hills of God. That upward look of religion helps us recover our sense of direction, and to obviate the very real danger that our twentieth-century civilization, with all its unlimited energies, may in the end be running circles in the dust with the ludicrous solemnity of a dog chasing its own tail.

I shall never forget a remark I once heard a man make in a business office of a Virginia city. A committee concerned about housing and living conditions in that city were met there to take counsel. One man, looking out of the window at factory chimneys near-by, saw huge volumes of sooty smoke from carelessly fired furnaces drifting like a black pall over a section of the city where thousands of men and women worked and lived. "That smoke will be the death of people in this city," he said. And then the second man interrupted: "It may be the death of some of the people," he said, "but we can't be interfering. That smoke is the life of the city."

"The life of the city!" The life, he meant, of unregulated money-making; the life of reckless business to do as it chose. The city to him was not primarily the home of men and women. The city was bank balances, and business ledgers, and multiplying dollar signs. And the smoke was the life of that.

But religion, through the voice of Jesus, has another message. Life does not consist of the abundance of the things which a man or a community possesses. Life consists of a man's realization of his right to live as a child of God. Life is the laughter of little children and the zest of men and women busy about a work that has some meaning. Life is enough provision for the body to give daily bread, without anxiety, and enough enlightenment for mind and soul to make us know that a man does not live by bread alone. Life is that adjustment to the wholeness of reality which makes our civilization grow, not by mere fatness, like a pig in a sty, but by faith in the width and height of interest which belongs of right to a human soul.

The gravest trouble with many of us to-day is that we have lost this steadying sense of what life and our world and the things we call its "opportunities" really mean. We are keyed, as some one has said, to "the movie mind and the jazz motion." The old vision of Ezekiel has become a modern nightmare. We, like him, have our vision of wheels; but unlike his wheels, ours have no spirit in the midst of them. Yet we must keep pace to their mad turning—factory wheels, wheels of trains, wheels of automobiles, "going nowhere at sixty miles an hour." But what are all our outward energies worth unless they bring their fruit of ultimate well-being? What is the use of solving the farm problem, economically speaking, unless we are creating happier men and women on the farms, and more wholesome cities for the farmers to feed? What hope is there of enforcing laws unless there are developed in the people great standards of loyalty to which in their own conscience they are loyal? What is the use even of saving civilization from destruction by wars unless civilization has those values of the spirit which make it worth the saving? Those are the questions with which modern facts confront us, and for the answer we need again to say as the psalmist said of old: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord."

In a very recent book the truth has been written vividly. A business man just back from Europe is in New York again:

> He stood contemplatively (he who a year ago would never have stood thus, but would have rushed with the most earnest of them) on the balcony overlooking the shining acres of floor of the Grand Central Station, like a roofed over Place de la Concorde. Why, he wondered, was it that the immensity of Notre Dame or St. Paul's did not dwarf and make ridiculous the figures of the worshippers as this vastness did the figures of travellers galloping to train-gates. Was it because the little people, dark and insignificant in the cathedrals, were yet dignified, self-possessed, seeking the ways of God, whereas here they were busy with the ludicrous activity of insects?
>
> He fancied that this was veritably the temple of a new divinity, the God of speed. Of its adherents it demanded as much superstitious credulity as any of the outworn deities—demanded a belief that Going Somewhere, Going Quickly, Going Often, were in themselves holy and greatly to be striven for.

These sentences do not come from the writings of some orthodox teacher of religion. They come from *Dodsworth,* the latest novel of Sinclair Lewis.

It may be that they are symptomatic, as indeed I think the whole tone of *Dodsworth* is symptomatic. They seem to reveal a real and irrepressible weariness with the confused and purposeless activities of our time. From our shallow frivolities, men will be swinging back to what Walter Lippman in his brilliant *Preface to Morals* calls those "cardinal virtues (which) correspond to an experience so long and so nearly universal among men of our civilization that when they are understood they are seen to contain the deposited wisdom of the race." And here is where religion will lift itself like the high hills of God—the religion which recalls men to their forgotten ideals. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "Now are we the sons of God." "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." "Whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all." "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God."

LINKED WITH THE SAVIOR

In the third place, religion brings the sense of an infinite companionship. It not only gives great ideals, but it gives also the realization that in the midst of the ideals is a loving God who links our lives with His.

This realization may make the difference in some hard-fought human cause between perseverance and surrender. There are hundreds of men and women who in the press of public affairs may come to the point where the good things they believe in and are working for seem humanly impossible. They are tempted to disbelieve their own belief, and to abandon the hard effort as hopeless. But then to the spirit, which otherwise might be defeated, the voice of religion comes as with a song.

It fortifies my soul to know
That though I perish, truth is so.
That howsoe'er I stray or range
Whate'er I do thou dost not change;
I steadier step when I recall
That though I slip, thou dost not fall.

When some one once asked Charles Kingsley what was the secret of his strength, he answered: "I have a Friend," and among the men and women who daily are doing the world's hard tasks and "carrying on" when the load is heavy and others grow discouraged, there are those who likewise can say that the secret of their power lies in their relationship to that eternal Friend who sticketh closer than a brother and whose resources do not fail.

Yet you may have one more question which I must try to answer. You may admit the value of religion as inspiring public affairs. But what of religion *in* public affairs? There may be the rub. Can religion mix in practical matters—in prohibition and politics and peace propaganda and the rest—and not lose its purity and its distinctive power?

There is a fable which many would believe in. A man was walking one day with the Devil, and on the road ahead of them walked another man.

The man ahead stopped, and, stooping, picked up something from the ground.

The man walking beside the Devil clutched the Devil's arm.

"Did you see what the man picked up?" he said.

"Yes, I saw it," replied the Devil.

"Well, you take it very coolly," his fellow-traveler replied. "Aren't you afraid of what it may do to you? Do you realize that what he picked up was a piece of Pure Truth?"

"Yes, I realize it," said the Devil, "but I know exactly what to do so that his Pure Truth cannot do me any harm."

"What will you do?"

"I will tempt him to organize it."

There are times when we believe that fable. To organize truth, and to organize religion may seem to be merely mixing it with clay. We wonder whether, after all, religion must not be kept separate from the everyday affairs of this world. Yet "the Kingdom of God," as Jesus said, "is like leaven which must be kneaded into the unleavened mass until the *whole* is leavened." To accomplish this is admittedly difficult, but it is spiritual cowardice not to try. There is no province of this world's interests into which religion ought not to enter; but it must enter not with the world's weapons but with its own. It must organize to tell the truth—the truth about drink and drunkenness, the truth about business greed and industrial injustice, the truth about war—and it must give the encouragement of fellowship to those who want to see the truth prevail. It must do exactly what the Commissions of the Federal Council of Churches are doing now—gather the information, and spread the knowledge of those facts in our contemporary life in which the ideals created by religion ought to be made effective. A right religion will not stoop to corrupt alliances. It will dare to be patient because it trusts not in shrewd manipulations but in the persuasive might of the truth itself. And if religious leaders sometimes fail in this, and degrade religion to the engine of a faction, the fault may be in all of us who have not cared enough about religion to find a better way. The best corrective for those who are tempted to take short cuts is to show that the rest of us are bent on walking a real road that gets us forward; and the best guarantee of social progress is the will among us all to lift our eyes to the hills of the thoughts of God.

CHAPTER II

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

HENRY W. McLAUGHLIN

THERE are certain things in national affairs which are calculated to give us grave concern. The growing power of wealth held in the hands of a few people is threatening the liberties of the multitudes. There is widespread evidence that some governors, legislators and judges have obtained their positions through graft and other methods that are contrary to the principles of sound democratic government. There is a lowering of ideals of the sacred relationship which should be maintained between man and woman, the loosening of the marriage bonds and the increase of divorce. Crime is becoming so prevalent that we find it necessary to have a National Crime Commission to promote law enforcement. If we permitted ourselves to dwell upon these evil tendencies all of us would soon become doleful prophets.

A REMEDY

I would be a pessimist if I did not believe that there is a remedy for society.

"Make the world safe for democracy" was a war slogan of Woodrow Wilson. The need of to-day is a democracy that is safe for the world. No people can successfully govern themselves unless they constitute a trustworthy citizenship. The only kind of democracy that is safe for the world is a Christian democracy.

A nation cannot be Christianized by evangelizing only its cities. If America is to be truly Christian, there must be a nation-wide program of sane evangelism and Christian education in every countryside. "The gospel is the power of God." All readers may not be interested in the country church for its own sake, but every patriot is vitally concerned about the welfare of his nation.

PURE SOURCES

How can we preserve the integrity of our country and perpetuate its institutions? The answer is: The nation must be kept pure and virile in its ideals at the sources of its supply. You cannot have pure rivers from muddy springs, productive fields from infected seed plots and fruitful orchards from diseased nurseries. The country communities are the springs, the seed plots and the nurseries of the nation's life. President Roosevelt, in his speech submitting the report of the Country Life Commission, February, 1909, said in part:

> The men and women on the farms stand for what is fundamentally best and most needed in our American life. Upon the development of country life rests ultimately our ability, by methods of farming requiring the highest intelligence, to continue to feed and clothe the hungry nations; to supply the city with fresh blood, clean bodies, and clear brains that can endure the terrific strain of modern life; we need the development of men in the open country, who will be in the future as in the past, the stay and strength of the nation in time of war, and its guiding and controlling spirit in time of peace.

Most of our men of wealth who have become the nation's benefactors, our statesmen who have been the pathfinders of progress, our educators who have been the builders of our institutions and our editors who have fostered lofty national ideals were born and reared in country communities. Investigations reveal that these leaders have come from the best type of rural communities. The national safety, therefore, will depend upon having a sufficient number of such communities from which the nation may draw its leadership.

One of the chief essentials of the right kind of a country community is to have in it the right kind of a country church. The maintenance of the country church is, therefore, not only an ecclesiastical problem but a matter of vital national concern.

While the better country districts are the sources from which America draws its constructive leadership, the worst country communities are the crime-breeding areas of the nation. A recent survey reveals the fact that ten Southern cities lead Chicago in homicides per thousand of the population. President Hoover, in a recent address to the newspaper men said: "Human life and property are relatively more unsafe in America than in any other civilized country in the world." It is a startling fact that human life is cheapest in Southern cities made up largely of country people lately come to town. These country people have come from rural areas where the populations are underprivileged in economics, sanitation, medical care, education opportunities and religious leadership. In these areas not only are schools poor but the country churches, if maintained at all, are inadequate. Most of those which exist, if there is one at all, have either an uneducated or a non-resident ministry.

TRAINED RESIDENT PASTORS

It is imperative that the country people in these neglected areas should have the right kind of public school opportunities, but education alone will not make a people righteous. It is even more imperative that alongside of the country schools there should be maintained the right kind of churches, with properly trained resident pastors who are volunteers not only as national patriots but as followers of Christ, who gave as the crowning evidence of His Messiahship that the "poor have the gospel preached unto them." Can it be true that the Church of Christ would neglect any people because they are poor?

Already some choice young ministers, who have been challenged with the facts, are volunteering for country church work, just as others have given their lives to foreign fields. Is this not an evidence of the revival of true religion? Dynamic religion is sacrificial. Also city churches are beginning to take a livelier interest in giving religious privileges to the people of the rural areas. Not only is this the Christ-like spirit but it constitutes the hope of the city churches. "Out of the tillage of the poor will be produced the harvest of the future." The future of the churches in the cities is bound up with the fate of the churches in the countrysides.

MODERN SUBSTITUTE FOR WAR

They who hear the call of Christ for life devoted to the shepherding of the sheep in the open countryside, become recipients of many rewards. There are sacrifices it is true, but along with them are compensations. There are hardships like those of the pioneers, but the experiences of such a life have been potent factors in making

America great. It is not necessary for men to learn hardihood in the school of war so long as America holds so many challenges for adventure in the pressing problems of peace. Even to one who thinks only in terms of self-interest, a life of leadership in the country has its attractions.

But one who hears the call prompted solely by altruistic motives becomes the heir of the most valuable possession, that of the satisfying life, which is the product of a consciousness that one is living in obedience to the call of God to a great and challenging task.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING ACT

The Farm Relief Law, recently enacted by the United States Congress, appropriated five hundred million dollars and called nine well-qualified men to constitute the Farm Board, at a salary of twelve thousand dollars and expenses each per year. In the judgment of its advocates, this was not a piece of class legislation. The intention is to deal with a great national problem, the solution of which will determine the economic and social well-being of all classes of our people. The security of every other industry is dependent upon the stability of agriculture. Whatever promotes the economic and social condition of the farmers improves the economic and social well-being of the nation. Agriculture is a basic industry. Those engaged in agriculture, as well as the resources which they produce, constitute the source of the nation's supply. The future of the nation will depend upon the character of its country people to-day. The country churches are the finest character factories the world has known. As Grace Noll Crowell says about country churches:

Symbols of faith, they lift their reaching spires
Above green groves down many a country way;
And on the wide plains there are altar fires
That light the forms of those who kneel to pray.
Oh, I have seen them stand knee-deep in wheat:
White country churches rising from the sod,
Where men, in gratitude for bread to eat,
Have paused and reared their altars to their God.

Symbols they stand, of mankind's daily need:
The urgent need to pray, the need to praise.
Without their altars men grow blind indeed,
And grope bewildered down unlighted ways.
The look of God is over every land
Where men have toiled—and where their churches stand.

RICH MEN

The cities of the nation to-day are largely what the country communities were yesterday; and the cities of to-morrow will be largely what the country communities are to-day. Roger Babson has told us that the men who are controlling the finances of Chicago, New York and Philadelphia and the other great cities of this nation were not born and reared in those cities whose finances they are controlling, neither were they born in any other cities. Those who are not sons of preachers are sons of farmers. Ex-Governor McCorkle of West Virginia, who was reared on a farm in Rockbridge County, Virginia, says that he had at one time as guests in his home, nineteen of the leading financiers of America, among them John D. Rockefeller, and in comparing notes they discovered that every one of them had been reared on a farm. The danger to the nation, arising from its wealth being held in the hands of a few people, depends upon the character of the men who hold that wealth. The nation is safe and safe only so long as its rich men are dominated in their motives and actions by the principles of the teachings of Jesus. Rich men with good characters and altruistic purposes are a blessing to the nation and to mankind. Rich men who are selfish and dishonest can wreck a nation's fortunes and curse the peoples of their own and succeeding generations. The churches located in the rural communities have it in their power to mold the characters of the boys and girls who in days to come will control the nation's wealth.

STATESMEN

We have discovered also that a large percentage of our statesmen were once country boys. Ralph S. Adams, Superintendent Department of Country Life, Reformed Church, U. S., is authority for the statement that seventy-two per cent of the United States Congressmen, seventy-eight per cent of the members of the United States Senate have an agricultural background. We know that both the President and the Vice-President of the United States were farm boys. When Herbert Hoover went to Leland Stanford and wished to work his way through college, the President of that institution asked him what he knew how to do. He replied: "I know how to take care of horses." He paid his expenses the first year by feeding, watering and currying horses. The nation is safe and safe only so long as its chief executives, its legislators and administrators of justice are men whose motives are actuated and whose lives are controlled by the principles of the teachings of Jesus. The determinative factor in shaping the character of these men, to whom is being committed the fortunes of the nation, was the country church which ministered to their spiritual needs or failed to minister to them during the plastic years of childhood and adolescence.

EDUCATORS

We have discovered that a large percentage of our educators were born and reared in the country. In a group of seventy-five men, mostly college presidents, deans and professors, it was discovered that seventy of them had come from farms or small villages. This nation is safe and safe only so long as the men and women who shape the thinking of the youth who are to become the leaders of thought and action in the world of to-morrow have conceptions of life such as we find in the teachings of Jesus. If the country churches where these teachers were born and reared have failed in their task, we may well look with gloomy forebodings to the dire results which are the natural fruitage of faulty ideals of living.

There have been moving from the country to the city annually about two million people. Those who have been the best contribution of the countryside to the nation's leadership have come mainly from the right kind of rural communities. The neglected country sections are criminal producing areas of the nation. The task of the country church is of such vital importance that it has logically found a place at a Round Table in the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia.

Country churches must be established and maintained, of the kind to meet the needs of the changed conditions under which we are now living. More is needed than the old once-a-month type of program.

Schools which were good enough for our fathers will not do for the present day.

Roads over which the previous generations traveled cannot be tolerated now.

The first step toward the evolution of the country church, adequate for the new day, is to arouse a public opinion that will demand and secure the right kind of a ministerial and lay leadership.

The chapters of this book give attention to the discovery, the program and the problems of the country church. The country preacher and the country doctor are also discussed. The hope of the future largely depends upon the influence of these as leaders in the country church.

The country church is the determinative factor in the social, intellectual, physical and spiritual welfare of the youth of the countryside. The country churches produce the kind of men who make for better soil, better seed, better sires and better selling. All of these because they are men of vision and have the kind of character that transmutes vision into reality. But, as seen above, these leaders in the countryside have in their hands the shaping of the character of the nation.

PART II

DISCOVERY

CHAPTER III

DISCOVERY OF THE COUNTRY COMMUNITY

HERMANN N. MORSE

THERE are many aspects of the country-church situation with which we cannot here deal, important though they are. We have no present concern with those characteristic weaknesses which arise from overchurching, faulty distribution of churches, the overburdening of the ministry through a clumsy circuit system, the lack of an adequately prepared and properly supported leadership, poor physical equipment for a modern program and the widespread existence of a narrowly sectarian point of view which defeats any broadly conceived program of evangelism, education and service. These are fundamental considerations, but the limitations of topic and time exclude them. For our purpose we must assume a church that is spiritually and intellectually prepared to serve its community and to face the practical question of how it may go about it.

WEAKNESSES OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

From this point of view there are three prevalent weaknesses of the country church to which the survey may make some contribution. The first is that, generally speaking, the Protestant Church has no theory of a parish based upon a study of the area to which it ought to attempt to minister. Its parish is not in a strict sense a geographical concept at all but is no more than the sum of its supporters and adherents. A majority of the unchurched families of America are for all practical purposes within the parish of no church. This is not for lack of churches conveniently near. They may live within the sound of the bells of a dozen of them and yet be a part of the attentive concern of none. The average church serves its own people and those who seek it. The country will not be evangelized until the churches conceive it to be their primary function to cultivate the entire area of the inhabited land and until every household is understood to be a part of the parish responsibility of some church. That is very far from being the case at present.

A second weakness akin to the first and springing from the same causes is that, generally speaking, the Protestant Church thinks in terms of constituencies rather than of populations. You may say that comes to the same thing. It does. Most churches think in terms of their "birthright members." Many of them are class churches appealing only to a particular social level or intellectual or emotional type. Few of them are community churches in the sense that they actually serve all elements in the community and all aspects of community life. We call a church successful if it wins and holds enough people to support it "in the manner to which it has been accustomed," though there may be as many more people in its community whose very names it does not know or whose existence it has never discovered. If we could learn to think not of our constituencies but of the available population, we might, like the Shepherd in the parable, show some concern for the sheep not in the fold and go seek them.

In the third place, the most amazing thing about the country church is on how meager a program it can keep itself alive and satisfied. Thousands of churches exist on not much more than a preaching service a month, a makeshift Sunday school and an annual revival. Such religion is cheap. That is, it costs very little and it secures benefits for the community that are about proportional. In the average instance even among the strong churches the program is formal, conventional and stereotyped. Adaptation is a word not in the vocabulary of the average church. To ascertain by study to what particular needs of its people it might profitably minister for the advancement of the Kingdom is no part of its practice.

It is with reference to these three weaknesses that the survey should be most useful to the average church. By survey I mean no more than the systematic assembling and use of necessary information. Leave elaborate techniques and abstruse researches to sociologists and statisticians. There are certain things a church needs to know about itself and its people, certain things of proved utility and practical value. The minister's concern with a survey relates to those things. The technical requirements for ascertaining them are relatively simple; the time and strength required are no more than should be invested by an earnest minister in the pastoral work of his church.

Country Church Problems

The first problem is to discover and define the area which, with reference both to the location of other churches and to the natural social and economic groupings of the people, would constitute the parish. It is my belief that under modern conditions of improved transportation and wider social intercourse we must adopt as our guiding principle for church development an approximate identification of the parish area with the larger social community. We need not pause to debate definitions. By parish I mean the area for which an individual church or a group of coöperating churches assumes responsibility for definite religious cultivation. The community is commonly understood as the area within which the majority of the interests of the majority of the people have a common focus. Within the community are often smaller social groupings, sometimes geographical neighborhoods, sometimes groupings on social or race lines. Many of these smaller units have real social significance. In the South, particularly, open-country neighborhoods are socially important, and the village or town trade centers have commonly less social influence in the country than they have in the North and West. Even so, my general principle stands. These open-country neighborhoods are commonly too small to develop a well-rounded community life or to support adequate institutions.

The present situation as regards the church has certain inherent weaknesses. The average village or town is overchurched. That is, it has more churches than the population within its corporate limits can properly equip, organize, or maintain. Yet the average village or town church exercises very little influence and draws very few adherents from outside its corporate limits. It hasn't anywhere near so long a service range as a bank or a good grocery store. It seldom has any contact with near-by open country churches, unless it is financially so weak that its minister needs the added support from supplying an open-country point. There are exceptions, of course, but that is the general situation through the South. On the other hand, the open-country territory is dotted with small churches. The average open-country church is a neighborhood institution. Its range of influence is strictly limited. Its possible constituency is too small to develop a church which can meet our modern standards of church efficiency. The open-country churches are commonly much too close together. The problem of competition between them is not exclusively an interdenominational problem, for near-by churches of the same denomination very frequently hamper and limit one another's development. The result is that the average Southern county has one church for every two hundred or three hundred people. Seventy widely scattered Southern counties representing a great variety of conditions showed one church to every three hundred and sixteen people, including towns, villages and open country. An obvious result of this situation is that the villages and towns have more resident ministers than they need, or can make good use of, and the open country lacks trained resident leadership since its churches ordinarily must be combined in large and unwieldy circuits. In these same seventy counties only six per cent of all the churches had full-time resident pastors. Less than half of one per cent of the open-country churches had such pastors.

SURVEY PROCEDURE

Suppose, however, that we begin by defining a natural community. Start from any center, find by inquiry the distance from that center in each direction within which practically all the people use the same facilities for such common needs as retail buying of household necessities, banking, entertainment, secondary education. Then suppose that we could cultivate that area as the natural larger parish area of the churches within it, working on a concerted program. The result would be that the entire area might be intensively cultivated instead of as at present, when an unnecessarily large number of churches, poorly distributed and acting independently of each other, subject some areas to a high degree of competition while leaving other areas actually unserved. For the present that may sound a bit idealistic but it would be effective.

The first step, then, is to define the community. The community is the larger setting of the social activity of the people. The whole tendency of modern rural development is to emphasize its importance as the service unit. Under present circumstances the churches are at a disadvantage in that each of them deals with only a segment of the community and hence is unduly restricted in its outlook and unable to take advantage of the unifying tendencies that are binding people together in their social, economic and other interests. The community is at a disadvantage in that its religious forces do not make a united impact upon its life, in that they lack the facilities for creating a community-wide program and in that they often tend to retard the process of wide-scale community organization by dividing the community. To take the community as the parish would mean that the church would work with the grain instead of against it.

The next step is to discover and define the smaller social groupings within the community. It is an exception rather than the rule to find a community with an entirely homogeneous population, the racial factor aside. The town or village breeds class distinction almost as readily as the city, and such distinctions are by no means absent from the open country. The denominational divisions of a small community are as likely to be rooted in social differences as in theological differences, much more likely, in fact. The church that undertakes community-wide service quickly becomes aware of this. It requires more than a pious wish to unite an entire community in one religious program.

A third consideration is to acquaint ourselves with those institutions and agencies present in the community, the work of which touches upon the interests of the church. The most important are those concerned with education, health, recreation and various forms of community improvement. Such institutions may be public, semi-public, or private. Some exist theoretically at least to serve the entire community, while others limit their attention to certain elements or neighborhoods in the community. It is obvious that any intelligently conceived religious program must be based on a knowledge of the available facilities for reaching the entire community in the meeting of the common needs of the people. Such needs, the satisfaction of which is involved in an enlightened standard of Christian living, include a reasonable economic opportunity, good homes, proper health conditions, educational and cultural opportunities for every one, play and recreation, friendship and a satisfying social life and some attention to the æsthetic. Such things are not primary responsibilities of the church, but the church needs to inform itself as to the status of the community in these regards and to furnish leadership and direction where needed.

We then come to what is the primary concern of the church, that is, the individual or the family for whose religious development the church is responsible. In this connection the survey has its greatest utility for the church. The other matters referred to might be quite simply and informally covered. With reference to the individual household it is desirable that a church periodically make a systematic canvass and record. Once in five years should suffice if the record is kept reasonably up to date during the interval. The community religious canvass can best be carried out through the coöperation of all churches present in the community. It can be organized and conducted along much the same lines as the financial Every Member Canvass. That is, under the direction of a central committee the entire territory can be districted and assigned to teams, which will then proceed to visit each household within the territory assigned, noting its location on a map and filling out for each a uniform card provided. In general, this work should be done by persons of mature years, of genuine religious interest and experience, and with at least an average amount of tact. To get the obvious facts as to residence, name, occupation and church relationship is important, but is only one consideration. More important is it to get an intelligent idea of the religious attitudes and problems of the individual household.

Many different cards are available for such a religious canvass. One prepared by the Home Missions Council and used widely in its surveys is simple to use and has proved practicable. The face of this card provides space for entering the family name, address, occupation and nationality, whether owner, or tenant, and how long resident in the community. Each member of the household is then entered separately, the ages of the children being given. For each person notation is made of church affiliation or preference, Sunday-school affiliation, and attendance upon church or Sunday school. A key is provided to note any points of particular interest such as church experience or education. On the back of the card is provided a space for recording subsequent pastoral calls, with any significant remarks which the surveyor or the minister may wish to record. This card then provides not only data of immediate value but a permanent record card of the relationship of the church to that household.

CONSERVATION OF SURVEY RESULTS

When the canvass is completed these cards should then be assorted according to church affiliation and denominational preference. If there is more than one church in the community the cards should be divided according to the expressed preference of the individual. Lists should be made of persons who are not connected with the church or its various organizations. These lists should be definitely cultivated and the information acquired should be immediately built into a follow-up program on the part of the churches. It will be useful as a result of the survey to make a composite map of the community, showing the location of all the homes and indicating by some simple device the church connection of the various families.

As the minister studies the results of such a canvass with the more religiously mature of his workers, he should strive to find for each family the answers to at least these four questions:

First, what are the factors which have contributed to or which have retarded the religious development of this household? Second, what are the needs of this family to which the church may minister? Third, what are its interests which will furnish points of contact for the church? Fourth, what abilities do the members of the family possess which the church may utilize in its work?

The next important step is for the church to study its own organization and program in relation to the needs of the community as they have been disclosed. On the side of its organization and equipment the church may well test itself by the accepted Par Standard for town and country churches, as developed by the Home Missions Council. This Par Standard, which has had wide acceptance, lists those elements of organization, equipment and program which should characterize an effective church. As a second step, a church might profitably consider its program of work, with reference on the one hand to the various age groups and on the other hand to the main lines of church activity. These may be summarized as worship and church services, evangelism and recruiting, religious education, personal ministry of helpfulness, missions and world program, community service, church finance and church publicity. The Home Missions Council has for distribution a project chart entitled "Kingdom Opportunities in the Church." This chart provides a space in which the church may enter those features of its program related to each of the above-mentioned lines of work, which are calculated to appeal to each of the various age groups.

This may all sound very intricate and elaborate. It will not be so if a church makes a systematic and cumulative study of its task over a period of years. It simply means that the church which goes through with this process in order to equip itself to discharge its largest function in the community will have prepared itself, first, to know the community of which its people are a part and to take that community as its definitely understood parish; second, to know the neighborhoods within that community which must be separately dealt with; third, to know all the people living within the community, where they are, who they are, what they are; fourth, to know the institutions upon which these people depend for service; fifth, to know the obvious needs to which the church might minister in building up the religious life of the community; sixth, to adapt its equipment, its organization and its program according to the analysis which it has made of its field; and, seventh, definitely to enlist its people in purposely planned activity for considered and understood ends.

This may be elaborate, but any first-class wholesale house knows that much about its territory. If the church knows that much its work will not be casual or stereotyped but purposeful and effective.

CHAPTER IV

DISCOVERIES IN RURAL VIRGINIA

Charles Horace Hamilton

We here present a description of the methodology, a summary of the more important findings, and the recommendation of the recent study of rural church conditions in Virginia. Our chief concern in making the Virginia study was with the community relations of the rural church. More particularly, we attempted to answer the following questions: How well is the rural church discharging its social obligations to the community? What contribution is the church making to the development of more satisfactory living conditions in the country? What support is the rural church giving to other agencies and institutions in their efforts along similar lines? In the course of the study it was found necessary and profitable to approach the subject indirectly as well as directly. A general statistical study of church membership, the location and distribution of churches, the financial support of the church, and the church leadership was made as a background for the more intensive case studies of church conditions in selected communities. A more detailed description of methodology is given below.

Methodology of Surveys

The United States Census of Religious Bodies. Many regional studies have been made of the rural church but the Virginia study is the only one, in our knowledge, that has included an intensive statistical analysis of county data furnished by the Census of Religious Bodies. The type of data furnished by the Census Bureau was found to be very accurate and well adapted to statistical analysis. The per-member church contributions, the ratio of churches to the population, and the percentage of church membership, are types of objective data from which some significant correlations and statistical tables were obtained. Our experience in using census data obtained from this study leads us to the conclusion that such data, taken over a large area, is quite reliable and that it yields very valuable results for the amount of labor involved. Census data alone, however, is not adequate. The methods described below were used to supplement the general background furnished by the statistical data obtained from the census.

A Study of Attitudes. An important feature of the Virginia study of the rural church was the investigation of attitudes of various groups toward rural social problems, toward the social function of the church, toward certain problems of the church, and toward the value of young people's religious organizations. The reason for going into the question of attitudes is evident. A church may be large, may be well financed, and may perform certain religious functions very efficiently and yet be making little contribution to the welfare of its supporting community—all because the minister, the church leaders and membership do not have the right attitude toward rural life, toward rural social problems or toward church problems.

The attitudes of various groups were studied partly through the use of "paper and pencil" tests, partly through the use of personal interviews with ministers and other church leaders, and partly by checking up on the activities of ministers, Sunday-school teachers, and various church groups. These tests were adapted to a quantitative objective type of scoring or rating; thus making it possible to compare the attitude of various groups or to measure the attitude of any one person in relation to other individuals in his group. A statistical study of attitudes, however, is of little value alone. Personal interviews were held with about one hundred ministers, through which greater insight of the nature of the attitude itself was obtained. Furthermore, it was possible to check the minister's statement with his actual accomplishments and with the opinion of others in his community.

Case Studies. Intensive case studies were made of church conditions and problems in eight communities of the state, and less intensive studies in several other communities. These case studies included: mapping of service zones of schools, churches, stores, and other community institutions; detailed description of the organization and activities of the church; house-to-house canvass of from fifty to one hundred families in each community to determine church and organizational relationships; and interviews with citizens of the community to obtain a more realistic insight into the social and religious problems of the community. Some of the most fruitful results of these case studies were the data obtained in overchurching, social stratification, attitudes, and church functions.

Questionnaires and Miscellaneous Methods. Questionnaires were used where the desired type of information justified such a procedure. The answers to the questionnaires were found to be unusually reliable when checked with data collected in the field and with census data, which fact is attributed to brevity, objectivity, and clearness of the questionnaires. Other methods of study included: The administration of a religious education test to more than two thousand high-school and college students; casual observation supplemented field notes written daily, and correspondence.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Favorable Conditions and Tendencies. Throughout this study, we endeavored to present an unbiased picture of the situation whether it was favorable or unfavorable. Although many unfavorable factors are inherent in the situation, we find that the rural church in Virginia is not the decadent institution often pictured in other states. The following summary of favorable factors should give church leaders courage in their efforts to solve the country church problem.

(1) Church and Sunday-school membership was shown to be increasing—both absolutely and relatively. It is estimated that rural church membership has increased from thirty-six per cent of the rural population in 1906 to forty-two per cent in 1926.

(2) The size of church congregations is gradually increasing, thus making it possible to support a larger community program. Some of the smaller, and unnecessary rural churches are dying out and other churches are increasing in size. It is estimated that the average rural church in 1906 had only one hundred members as compared to one hundred and twenty in 1926. There are quite a few large open-country churches in Virginia doing a type of work rarely excelled in city churches.

(3) Valiant efforts are being made with some success

to extend to rural people the more recent developments in the field of religious education. Many rural churches are building Sunday-school additions, which make possible more efficient educational activities, and which at the same time seem to be indicative of more fundamental changes in the current conceptions of religious training.

(4) Religious leadership training activities have increased very rapidly. If desired, even the most isolated rural community or county may now have the advantage of Standard Leadership Training Schools. District and state assemblies, conferences, and schools of religious education are doing not only more, but better work.

(5) Rural ministers are better trained and perhaps better paid than ever before. Furthermore, many ministers are making a great contribution to rural community life by giving their whole-hearted support and assistance to organizations and movements working for social, educational, and economic advancement of rural people.

(6) A substantial group of denominational leaders in Virginia is taking great interest in rural church conditions. Movements are under way to present a more united front in carrying out definite projects looking toward a solution of the rural church problem.

Unfavorable Conditions and Tendencies. The fact that rural church conditions are not so dark as often pictured, and the fact that there are some favorable tendencies should not be made an excuse for a complacent attitude toward the rural church problem. The following summary of undesirable rural church conditions should give renewed stimulus to a united effort to eliminate them.

(1) The financial support of the rural church is, as a rule, very inadequate. This condition is largely due to low farm income and denominational duplications. The

average contribution of white rural church members was $11.66, as compared to $4.14 for the negro rural member. The white urban member contributed an average of $25.33, as compared to $10.13 for the negro urban member. Any solution of the rural church problem must take this fundamental factor into consideration, because it is related, directly or indirectly, to every other phase of the situation.

(2) Church congregations are too small for efficient organization and for the support of ministers and workers. In eighteen counties the white rural church had an average of less than seventy-five members; and in thirty-nine counties, less than one hundred members. This condition is due to sparsity of the rural population, poor county roads, and overemphasis on denominational lines. A solution of this phase of the problem is thought by many to be the key to the whole situation.

(3) Certain social groups or classes of the population are not being adequately served by the church; and there are large numbers of inactive, indifferent church members. These conditions are largely due to social stratification, low educational level, a shifting rural population, and the lack of resident, well-trained ministry. These questions have not received sufficient attention from church or educational leaders. Due to the conditions noted above, twenty-two counties were found to have thirty-five or less per cent of the rural white population in the church; and forty-seven counties to have thirty-five or less per cent in the Sunday school.

(4) Religious education aims and methods in the country church, although improving, are still very indefinite and inadequate. The low grades made by college and high-school students on a religious-education test show in

a concrete way the inadequacy of present methods of religious education. This situation is largely traceable to the immaturity of the religious-education movement and to the lack of trained professional and lay leadership.

(5) The relation of young people to the church is a matter of serious concern. The problem is complicated by the drift of many young people to the cities and the annual exodus of others to college. In either case the church is losing a vigorous element of its membership, and often its most promising leaders. Even when college youth return to their home communities, they are frequently lost to the church because of their changed standards of living and their consequent dissatisfaction with country life and institutions. It is estimated that less than twenty per cent of the young people of Virginia, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four, are being reached by young people's religious organizations.

(6) Rural ministers, though well trained from some viewpoints have had very little training for the rural field. They have been trained along technical theological and religious lines and not along the lines of rural sociology, agricultural economics or other phases of rural life. Efforts are now being made, to correct this situation—not to eliminate theology but to add more sociological and rural-life subjects. It has been carefully estimated that less than twenty per cent of the white rural ministers in Virginia have been of material assistance in building up rural community life in such matters as health, agriculture, reading, recreation, social service, and education.

(7) The message and program of the rural church has not been closely correlated with the work of other institutions and agencies working for the betterment of rural

life. This condition is largely due to the type of training of rural ministers and denominational leaders.

(8) There are no well-defined ideas among the laity and the ministry as to the proper task of the church in country life. This situation shows a serious lack of social education in our high schools, colleges, and theological seminaries.

(9) Progressive rural church programs have often failed because of the conservative and cautious attitudes of rural people. Ministers frequently go to the city not for higher salaries but because their ideas are not appreciated in the country, and congenial companionship is lacking.

(10) Rural church work is frequently hampered by a lack of appreciation and understanding on the part of superior denominational authorities and leaders. This situation goes back to the early training and education of such leaders and thus cannot be remedied in a short time.

A RURAL CHURCH PROGRAM

A rural church program is needed in Virginia. A definite plan of rural church development is prerequisite to any adequate solution of the problems presented in this study. The program itself should be drawn up and adopted by an official group representing the leading denominations of the state. The following recommendations and suggestions are not intended as a complete program, but rather as a basis for further thought and discussion.

Leadership Training. In order to train rural ministers and other professional church workers for leadership in the rural community, it is recommended that their course of study in college, training school, or seminary should include material designed to give them a general knowledge of the sociological and economic problems of country life. Such courses as Community Organization, Agricultural Economics, Rural Sociology, Recreation, the Bible and Country Life, Social Teachings of the Prophets, the Social Task of the Church, and the technique of making community surveys, are suggested.

It is recommended that at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute there be held an annual short course for rural ministers and other church workers, beginning in 1930. The purpose of such a course would be to give church leaders a knowledge of present-day country-life problems, a type of education not furnished for all ministers by any other agency in the state. It is further recommended that the various denominational bodies approve such a school, and coöperate to the extent of encouraging and assisting selected rural ministers to attend.

The present programs of lay leadership training—training Sunday-school teachers, young people's workers, etc.—cannot be too highly praised. It is recommended and earnestly hoped that a more concerted attempt will be made to bring the advantages of leadership training to the many small isolated rural communities of the state. Every county and many small towns and rural communities should have the advantage of at least one leadership training school a year. In pursuance of this policy, it is recommended that a coöperative agency representing all denominations concerned can best promote and supervise the holding of training schools in small towns and rural communities. It is further recommended that in the curriculum of these training schools strong emphasis be placed on the relation of religion to such everyday problems of the farm community as education, health, coöperation, and all other phases of "better farming, better business, better living."

Improved Methods of Church Work and Religious Education. Community surveys, planned programs, weekday schools of religion, daily vacation church schools, trained directors of religious education, paid Sunday-school teachers, socialized recreation for their young people, and fully graded lesson materials, are some of the methods of religious education and church work greatly needed in rural Virginia. These innovations cannot, of course, be adopted at once by all churches in the state. They can, however, be adopted by some of the stronger rural churches and by many of the small churches working coöperatively. It is especially recommended that efforts be made to provide dignified programs of worship in the rural church.

Relation of the Church to Rural Community Life. The local church should relate its message and teachings more directly to rural life needs and conditions. The church has a definite responsibility in helping to raise the farmer's income and his standard of living. Careful surveys of social and religious conditions should be made the basis of the local church program.

Relation of the Church to Other Agencies and Institutions. It is recommended that rural ministers and other church leaders encourage and inspire farm people to make the fullest possible use of the many public and voluntary agencies and organizations interested in rural life development.

County and Community Surveys. Whereas the solution of many phases of the rural church problem will rest with those immediately concerned, and whereas such groups as county or district councils of religious education, ministerial associations, and other interdenominational forces need more detailed knowledge of their fields than this study gives, it is recommended that intensive county and community surveys of rural religious and social conditions be made. Such surveys should aid in bringing a larger percentage of the population into the church; should help to eliminate the evils of overchurching and underchurching; and should bring about a closer relationship between the church and other agencies working in the country. County agents, health workers, school superintendents, and public welfare officials should be asked to coöperate in such surveys.

Increasing Financial Support. It is recommended that a systematic plan of giving be adopted by all churches and rural church members. The church consumes too much energy in raising its annual budget. It is further recommended that churches in the different areas of the state should be assessed (if assessed at all) according to their ability to pay and not "all the traffic will bear." If the church should get behind movements to increase the farmer's income, its financial problem would not be so difficult.

Location and Consolidation of Churches. It is recommended that church leaders and others proceed with caution and patience in the movement to consolidate rural churches. All new churches, however, should be located at natural community centers, preferably near the consolidated high school or village—thus strengthening the bond of association at one community center. The consolidation movement—which will gather impetus sooner or later—should proceed with churches of the same faith, as much as possible. It is also recommended that the whole question of home-mission support be studied in more detail for the purpose of ultimately eliminating denominational duplication. Missionary support should not be extended to small churches competing with larger churches of another denomination.

It is recommended that experiments be made in consolidating Sunday schools rather than churches. Such a development would not run counter to the sentiments and prejudices of rural people. Furthermore, the various denominations are more agreed on principles of religious education than on doctrine. The small one-room churches left in the open country by such a plan could still be used for preaching outposts or for meetings not requiring larger groups. Another suggestion is experimentation with "reciprocal exchanges," i.e., one of the two denominations by a "Christian's agreement" withdrawing from a parish area in which the other denomination is stronger.

The Larger Parish Plan. It is recommended that serious attention and study be given by church leaders to the use of the Larger Parish Plan of rural church administration, a thing now made practicable by improving transportation facilities. As long as there are small churches, and in lieu of consolidation, such a plan will be useful. M. A. Dawber describes the plan as follows:

> The Larger Parish is based on the idea of several churches under coöperative and comprehensive leadership. Instead of two or three churches on a circuit, with an untrained pastor struggling alone, the plan seeks to group several churches under a combined ministry that will be trained to meet the varying needs of all the people in a given territory.
>
> A minimum of leadership would be, first, a supervisory preacher-pastor who will be responsible for

the general program. Second, a man who, in addition to preaching, will care for the young men's and boys' work for the entire field. Third, a woman who will have general charge of the program of religious education and the girls' and children's work. Such a group working together can render service to a larger group of people with a broader program, eliminate duplication, and include the vital elements of a Christian program which are frequently omitted under the present system.

Interdenominational Adjustments. It is recommended that a State Federation of Churches be formed in Virginia for the purpose of making the many interdenominational adjustments necessary to a solution of the rural church problem. It is also recommended that all denominations give their active support to the present Virginia Council of Religious Education.

Rural Church Specialists. It is recommended that each larger denomination, not now doing so, employ a well-trained man in rural church work, comparable to those now in charge of special phases of the church's program or to the specialists of various public service agencies, a man who would be: (1) Available to advise and assist rural pastors in their problems and difficulties. (2) Responsible for systematically presenting in the religious press and at district and county conferences, associations, presbyteries, etc., the problems of the rural church and means of dealing with them. (3) The supervisor of any special plan of rural parish organization of church work adopted by his denomination.

Responsibility of City Church Members. Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the responsibility of city church members for assistance in building up the rural church and the rural community. The assistance of the city church in rural church work would make possible many of the suggestions given above. This assistance should be real and tangible and should be divided into three distinct lines of effort. (1) Support at denominational conventions, assemblies and board meetings of policies designed to meet rural church needs. (2) Definite financial aid in the development of the religious educational program in the country—including support of leadership training schools, vacation Bible schools, regional directors of religious education, specialists in rural church and Sunday-school work. (3) Influence in definite support of state measures designed to advance country life—considered as a matter of Christian duty—such measures as, increasing state support of rural schools, health work, and farm and home demonstration work; extension of rural library facilities; extension of electrical power lines into rural areas; provision for public welfare work; and further development of lateral road building.

Responsibility of Church Boards, Conferences, Synods, and Associations. It is recommended that church boards, conferences, synods and associations should take the official steps necessary to put into effect the above recommendations. It is also recommended that such bodies should more definitely acknowledge their social responsibility to the rural population of the state, not in any spirit of uplift, but as a coöperative undertaking in which resources of means and talents are made available for the entire people. More specifically, it is recommended that three resolutions be passed by such groups: (1) Urging rural ministers to support more fully the work of the several public-service agencies, such as: the Agricultural Extension Service, the State Department of Health, Education, and Public Welfare. (2) Approving the idea of Rural Life Sunday on the part of both rural and urban churches, on the fifth Sunday after Easter, or a date to be fixed by each denomination. (3) Approving the idea of a Rural Minister's and Church Worker's Training School to be held at Virginia Polytechnic Institute each summer.

Responsibility of Other Groups. It is recommended that urban civic clubs, women's clubs, and such organizations, include in their plan of study for the year at least one, and preferably several, programs in which rural life and institutions are given consideration.

A Rural Church Conference. Finally, it is recommended that a state-wide, interdenominational Rural Church Conference be called by the Virginia Rural Church Board during February of 1930, for the purpose of drawing up a more definite rural church program. Preceding this meeting it is suggested that those concerned give careful attention to the findings of this study and go to the conference prepared to discuss intelligently the recommendations presented.

CHAPTER V

TWENTY YEARS COUNTRY CHURCH OBSERVATIONS

WARREN H. WILSON

WHEN churches languish we say that religion is waning. But religion is not waning in America. We worship even stocks and stones. The stones are monuments to the dead. We worship the President enthroned in Washington for four or eight years, embalmed afterwards in propaganda, and entombed ultimately in marble. We worship the nation. Most of our religious sects regard the Constitution as equally infallible with the Bible. They keep the cross out of the churches and erect the flag there.

In country places we worship man. The poorer the place and the sorrier their houses and streets the more enthusiastically do they point to man, his salvation, his character, his domination, as the end and aim of religion. In cities and universities writers, devout and thoughtful, fill the magazines and newspapers with discussions of religion in all its phases. The universities teach religion in their classes. The country is full of religion: and pastors who deplore the small attendance upon their churches report that the people who will not attend are pondering the questions and eager to discuss the truths of the Christian religion.

Yet the churches languish. They struggle in cities to assemble the people who are leaving the country in congregations numbering thousands; and hundreds attend their services. The cities do better in worship of God than the country. Only one-fifth of rural people are enrolled in Protestant churches, altogether—the Catholic populations are not generally rural. The old rural evangelism of the brush-arbor and the big tent is worn out, and exhorters have not yet been succeeded by pastors in more than one-sixth of the rural communities. One-seventh of the rural communities have no church: Yet home missionaries cannot be sent to them because the denominations are in a deadlock. Their hands are against one another and their feet are tethered to the necessity of "holding their own."

Yet I am not discouraged concerning religion in America. The ministers are sound and honest: they are even becoming humble in face of this amazing paradox. They see what is called "Holiness" raising its tabernacles in communities which they neglect, and forming new denominations overnight. New exhorters ordain themselves, because no one else will, to denounce the Baptists, the Methodists and the Reformed: and farmers' wives fall stricken, in abandoned meetinghouses, and roll on the floor in conviction of the truth of the gospel, in anguish over the theological sins of others.

That is hopeful, though it is shocking. It is evidence that the old days are returning. The teaching of Christianity is known in America, and the story is simple, so that even a fool cannot go very far wrong in it. The amount of consecration evidenced by the church people is great: and the continual discussion of the nature and process of religion that is being carried on in a free atmosphere, promises well for the future. If we discussed politics as we did one hundred years ago, it would be well for the state: and we who serve in churches may well view with hope the incessant clash and controversy which evidences the sincerity and the intelligence of the whole people upon the matter of religion.

I will not go into detail concerning the amounts of money contributed, nor the splendid edifices erected for the service of the Lord, but it is worthy of mention as showing how positive and how general are the religious convictions of our people.

For twenty years I have studied the country church situation, and tried with some success and often failure to find the way out. What have these two decades taught us? I will say that I think the way out is not the way of theocracy. To control the moral life of our people by passing and enforcing laws is only to drive the sinners away from the church door. And it turns back the progress of Christianity, which abandoned theocracy after the attempts of the Reformers, Calvin, Cromwell, and Laud, to control trade and manufacture, as the mediæval clerics had done before the rise of modern finance and commerce. Union of churches has value, and ought to proceed as a matter of decency, but there is no solution of our anxieties in the union of such churches as cannot now contain the religious spirit of the times within them. To have one church in the town, instead of four, and that one just like the best of the four that preceded it, will not express a bursting and controversial Christianity. It is my conviction that our troubles are within the reach of the powers of those appointed to legislate upon these matters. There is enough of the spirit of experiment to find the way, if religious and civil legislators would only lift from our backs the burdens they have laid there. My contention in this paper shall be that the present state of the country church is an indirect result of bad legislation in Congress, as well as of neglect in the legislatures and in the national church bodies.

BURDENS OF THE COUNTRY PEOPLE

First, let us look at the burdens, direct and indirect, laid by the state upon country people. There has been for decades an exodus from the country. In the five years, from 1922 to 1927, millions of country people left the farms who did not return. This was the direct result of forces which government has fostered ever since the time of Henry Clay. The tariffs have "protected" manufacturers at the expense of farming, until a farmer's son or farmhand can get a better income in dollars in some manufacturing Detroit than he can earn in the open country. Mass production has come, as a result of fostering tariffs and of intensified engineering skill, and the goods have to be sold. What was once a luxury has become a necessity, by dint of passionate advertising taught in schools endowed with the surplus wealth of bloated manufacture: and a former President of the United States was moved to say to the assembled advertisers in Washington that they should press these surplus quantities of goods upon the people, who did not know that they wanted them.

But the tariff is not the only burden of government from which the farmers suffer. Talk about farm relief! What we need is relief from taxation imposed already by government. The major portion of the state government's burden is laid on land, and without reconstruction of state and local taxation, that burden has been increased during recent years, since the war, by one and two hundred per cent. These new roads, laid down in a short and costly period, for the convenience of motorists and the profit of manufacturers of motors, will have to be paid for, directly and indirectly in the greater part, by labor and the farmer.

From these impositions, which exact from the farmer too great a part of his pay for feeding the nation, the keener and more restless farmers flee to the cities, where there is a wage that seems adequate to bearing the load of national taxation, where at least he can hide from his harassed mind the whole experience of taxation.

Then the churches, impoverished already by the loss of their members, are surrounded by tenants. The lands about their ancient houses and graveyards are owned in a sinister proportion by landlords. Yet no state in the Union has attacked the knotty problem of landlordism. Landlord and tenant are generally outside the attention of the law. They are, in fact, outlaws, with all the faults which good men exhibit in all periods of history under outlawry. They rob and exhaust the soil, on whose fertility the church might exist. They raise one-crop products that bleed white the community and impoverish the home, until in hundreds of households in the farming sections there is not a chicken to kill for the minister's dinner, nor a pork sparerib to offer him for his own table.

The churches in the Middle West have been wracked by the earthquake shocks of farm speculation. Even the banks in Iowa, which loaned money on the inflated values of farm lands have failed. The legislatures might have restrained this mania by following the examples of British, German, Austrian and Australian states, in which large holdings of land are taxed in excess of small holdings, and in which the sale of land is discouraged by the imposition of a transfer tax that fills the treasury and discourages speculation in that value underlying all values. We cannot maintain a church among a people depleted and exploited, the leaders gone, their incomes snatched away by the forced selling of a commercial class, to whom the state gives all its encouragement. We cannot maintain a good church among a people from whom have been extracted by an adverse process of selection all the born traders, all the financiers, all the musicians, artists, inventors, administrators. Yet this adverse selection has the support of every highest power of the national government. Talk about farm relief! What the country churches need of government is to get off the backs of the working farmers.

Failures in the Department of Agriculture

But some one says: Have we not a national Department of Agriculture? Yes, we have, and it is fitting to say that the bureaus of that government department employ men and women devoted to the farmer, skillful and consecrated to his scientific, commercial and industrial success. The women in that department know what the country home should be; they say it diligently and convincingly. The scientists of the department are rendering the knowledge of the schools and laboratories in available forms, compactly stated, intelligible for the use of farming people.

But the department is not dominated by the interests of the farmers. It advocates coöperation indeed, after decades of delay and aversion. It teaches home making in scattered effusions. But the Secretary of the Department speaks the voice of business, of the manufacturer, of the financier. The chief policy of the department has for these two decades been to demand that the farmer produce for the traders to use, for the manufacturer to consume—more and more products that will come in cheap to the cities.

Is it an exaggeration to say that the present surplus of farm products is the undesired result of this persistent policy? If we had in Washington a farmers' department primarily attentive to the interests of farmers, in the aims they avow, in the profits they seek, in the homes they are trying to maintain, we would not have this present outcry.

And if the Department of Agriculture in Washington is so excellent, why was it not selected by Congress to administer this newly enacted farm relief? Why appoint a Board of Nine with salaries of twelve thousand dollars per year, to expend a half billion dollars, in vaguely defined ways, if the department was the friend of the farmer, and if it had the confidence of the country?

No, the department is another of the burdens from which the country people suffer. On the whole and in its total policy the national Department of Agriculture, in spite of the devoted efficiency of its scientific bureaus, has appeared often to be just another of the inflictions upon country people, which exploit them of their sons and daughters, and lay on them a burden too heavy to be borne.

The extension agents of the Department of Agriculture teach farmers not to think but to make money. They interpret agriculture in terms of trade and commerce, as the National Secretaries of the Department, from James Wilson, of Iowa, to Jardine, of Kansas, have declared it must be interpreted. Thus the farmer was denied the intellectual awakening that students in the universities have had: and the departments have not gained his confidence because they have tried to make him what he knows he cannot be, namely, a commercial success. The farmer would fain understand his own occupation, and he is given by the government departments an interpretation of the way of life of those who are his competitors. He would worship God after his own manner and he is given no large thoughts, such as stir the imagination of his teachers, but exhortation to make a profit, which he well knows is not likely to come to him.

Immigration Exclusion Acts

There is another and more recent piece of legislation adverse to the people who live on the land, in the Immigration Exclusion Acts. These laws shut the ports of the country in the face of laborers who would come from other lands. Formerly, the farmer could get one or more farmhands to share his toil; but now, with his own sons tempted away by higher wages, the larger farmers, who have the mind of good managers, are unable to till that big acreage on which the economists tell him they must expend their husbandry. Rather than devote his managing abilities to the small confines of a chicken farm, or bend his back upon a truck farm and demean his mind by chaffering over heads of lettuce and bunches of radishes, he goes to the city to see if there is not a chance for him to start a store. You know what the chain stores will do to him! So long as we use the powers of the national government to favor the combinations of manufacturers and organized laborers, by such laws excluding workers from the country, we are using that national government to destroy, or at least to distract, the farming population. So that I say on behalf of country churches, that their present condition of distraction and depletion is no more and no less than a measure of effects produced in this country by the exploitation of farmers by the national government, and their neglect or oppression by state governments.

The Country Preacher's Support

But have the churches no part in this maladministration? They have indeed: and if the national denominations would do their duty by their pastors, would cease to exploit the country preachers, and instead use their great powers to support and protect him, much of the present futility of the rural church would be changed to utility. I am going to plead the case of the country pastor now. I know well his weaknesses and mistakes. It is the fashion to point the finger at the faults, which are many. If I were speaking to ministers I would talk about his faults. I will say of him in this Institute only this: that he is honest and devoted, and fertile in resources. There would be no country church if it were not for his integrity, consecration and ability to shift for himself. He is expected to find unaided a church, or a group of churches, that will support him. The mission boards may give him a grant-in-aid, suitable to a missionary, which he is not, but they give it for only a year at a time. If it were not for their financial assistance, allowed him as a dole in the depleted and impoverished rural economy, he could not exist. The question of national support for the pastor, that will lift him above dependence upon the local congregation, distracted and exploited as I have said, and in need of "relief," is the first of all the questions awaiting solution by the American churches. Every pastor should have an adequate salary, secured to him by the national body to which he belongs, a house to live in, and an equipment for his work, including usually a mileage rate paid him for the use of his automobile. I will speak of this in detail later.

WORSHIP IN COUNTRY CHURCHES

The second thing the denominations can do is to develop the worship of God in country churches. Generally, country people have reorganized Christianity as a discipline of utility. They "get religion" and it "comforts" them. They "hire the minister to preach" and he "helps them" or "they have no use for him." In fact, American rural religion has little arrangement for God and is organized upon the principle of its usefulness and acceptance by man. It is, indeed, a series of cults of which it can be said with some truth that they offer comfort to man rather than reverence to God. There is a beginning of greater reverence and some churches, most of them in cities, are turning to a more solemn form. But so long as ministers are driven from church to church to get an adequate living as "preachers," there can be no development of the technique of worship. Probably nothing is more needed by a people tilling the land than the cultivation of a plastic, humble and submissive mind of patience, which can best be formed in the house of prayer.

TRAINING FOR RURAL PASTORS

The third service which the denominational leaders could render to their country pastors is intellectual. The religious schools have until very recently concerned themselves alone with teaching a body of doctrine, imparting a traditional inheritance. They take little account of the country church; and it is questionable whether, even in the most modern theological seminary, the chief concern is to prepare a man to be a good pastor. They try to make him know the dead languages in which are embalmed the records of a religious time like our own, but they do not tell him with a whole-hearted scholastic devotion how he may minister to modern Philistines, to a stiff-necked generation of Americans.

At this point we have, however, made some progress. There have been held, for nearly twenty years, summer schools for pastors, many of them in agricultural colleges, at which there has been offered to ministers the best scholastic service available, for the understanding of their occupation and their environment. Some of the seminaries also have stepped out a little into this new vocational field, adding courses short and elective upon the country church. But their rigid traditionalism, even in the best cases, still exalts the study of bodies of knowledge instead of interpreting the present period of the world's history. And the courses for country pastors are still too generally regarded as "practical courses" rather than as an awakening of the mind and a discipline of faith. They do not yet sanctify land, interpret labor with a sound body or character steadied by a decent income; but instead they teach the contents of books, and handle forever the dead material of textbooks, reference books; and embalm lectures in the oblivion of notebooks.

A New Religious Education

We need a new religious education; and the place for it shall be the country. It will be a religious teaching of which the community, not merely the Sunday school, shall be the arena. It will offer no long years in a distant college to win the scholar away from his home and his community; but courses of not more than six months, in which the scholar will think upon his inherited social order for a period not too long, under the inspiring influence of great and living teachers. In it books will take their rightful place—the great books, not textbooks; and the only notebook will be the mind of the student.

I am pleading the case of rural religion. It cannot advance without the help of the scholar and the scientific worker. The daily life of people who live on the land is filled with wonders, or else it is stupefied with superstitions, or dulled into indifference. Both superstition and indifference exclude Christianity. They would fit in very well with paganism; but Protestantism has at least succeeded in banishing idols and fetishes, fairies and hobgoblins from this land. Succeeded, I say; but they will come back, as they came back into Palestine in Old Testament times. They sent a man to jail for life this year in Pennsylvania for killing another who wore a fetish he coveted. Law and the prison house will not keep us from superstitions. Only an intelligent resident rural pastor can keep the idols, the ghosts, the totems and the little demons out. But the pastors need to be taught themselves how to interpret natural forces as materials in the hand of a creative God. I say, therefore, we need a new religious education. It must, however, be an interpretation of the rural material and environment. Something bigger than nature study and more intellectual than Boy Scouts is required; and there is a beginning of books from which its lessons may be derived. If it is true that the modern farmer must be scientific, it follows that the country church must interpret physical and biological science that he may have faith suitable to his occupation.

BETTER COÖPERATION NEEDED

The fourth service the national bodies might render to their country churches is to federate, affiliate and in many cases unite their national powers in the interest of the rural people. I am not advocating church union as a doctrinaire solution when I say there is much that can be done to abate the evident evils of rural church work, by means of a closer administrative oversight of village and open-country churches, and by the uniting of many whose disunion is no longer a sincere religious difference, but is now an occasion of social meanness.

In this matter we have made some progress. It was time we did so, for there are arising "community churches" in great numbers, independent of the great denominations, obedient to local economic interests. The Federal Council, the Home Missions Council, and the many state Federations are compromise arrangements, which suit the American opportunist mind. Here's wishing all of them more success!

A NEW DAY PROGRAM

Fifth, the best work we have done is the experiment of the great Protestant churches under leadership of such departments as my own. By means of surveys, by infinite and continuing discussions, we have wrought out a Country Church Program. It was accepted last year by the Foreign Mission Boards assembled at Jerusalem; and was published in Volume VI of their proceedings. I will not dwell on it, tempting as it is. I am proud of its clarity and sympathy, of its exclusions as well as of what it includes. Briefly, it is a statement that the church in a rural community should express its enlarging religious spirit in channels of health service, in promoting agriculture or other-land industry, developing educational service, organizing recreation, and in home making. This is just expressing what successful pastors are doing and have done for generations, in all lands of the earth, and putting their work in modern terms.

In this field of the pastor's service to his community we have indeed made much progress. There are now pastors in every state, sufficient in number to demonstrate the soundness of the program, to bring about in time a revolution in church work. But these pastors require the support of their denominations. If left unprotected they will be exploited by the district superintendents, who will load upon them their hopeless and superfluous congregations as "preaching stations." And above all, they require a financial administration whereby the national religious resources shall be used for the creation of pastorates rather than for the holding of denominational ground.

Permit me, therefore, to return to that administrative care of the congregation by the denomination. It is at this point that American churches are worst served, and it is at this point that free churches of Western Europe are best served. Following the example of the Free Church of Scotland, after its disruption from the Establishment in 1843, many European communions have each a central fund at headquarters, which pays to each pastor the minimum salary officially decreed by the denomination. Some do it even better, in that they make a payment adequate to securing for the pastor his salary from his church. For instance, the Irish Presbyterian Church pays each pastor about six hundred dollars, on two conditions: first, that his church repay to the Fund an amount each quarter proportioned to its ability; and second, that the congregation pay to its pastor a salary, including the Central Fund grant, equal at least to the minimum salary required by the church as a whole.

This method has many evident modifications. Its essence is the abandonment of the theory of self-support commonly cherished in this country; and the substitution for it of a national support for the pastor out of denominational funds. It would make the denominations, not the pastors, responsible for the maintaining of the local congregations. It would free the pastors from their shifty living and enable them to devote themselves to the cause of religion. It would put upon the local congregation the burden of determining whether it will survive or finish its cause; and thus would close up many churches which we now support. It would effect a dignifying of the ministry in longer pastorates, better educational standards, and would develop a pastoral mind, rather than a mere zeal to preach. It would lower administrative costs by discharging many secretaries who now are paid to promote churches that ought to support themselves or die out.

Finally, this administrative method would free the denomination for doing Home Missionary Work in the neglected communities, by supporting the zealous missionary adventures, to which we now have to deny support that we may "hold our own." We now divert mission funds to pay the salaries of pastors. There is still need of extending the churches in America.

I have attempted in this address to say the chief things that I have learned by twenty years devoted to the continuance of country churches. I believe, to summarize, that the national and state governments must lift the load they lay upon country people, and instead of devising further burdens, study the experience of other countries where the farmer is protected from exploiters rather than delivered to their hands, as he is in these United States. In addition, I am convinced that the churches themselves have much to do, that is well within their power, to support, to inspire and to direct the pastors who serve the farmers and villagers. I think you will agree with me that I have proposed nothing that will not be equally beneficial to city churches. I have spoken in national terms, believing that the finance of the country is no longer local but is national, the intellectual process of the nation is one, and the awakened religious spirit of our people is one, in seeking to know God. I plead for those national readjustments, by persons in authority, that will put the whole nation in a position to support, to protect and to continue the churches and their pastors in the villages and open country, and among the poor people of the down-town sections of the cities.

I believe in the future. It is the way of religion to advance by wonders, by new releases of faith, by amazing and prophetic leadership. So that I have not been ashamed to ask that what is necessary be done, for the continuance and the development of the country church in the United States of America.

PART III

PROGRAM

CHAPTER VI

FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

J. W. Perry

The object of every church and congregation is to help in building the Kingdom of God on earth through the conversion of men from lives of sin to righteousness, and through the building of Christian character; or in different phrase, to bring all men into the relation of true disciples of Jesus Christ, trained for efficient service.

In most things the function of the country and the city church is the same, their aim is one, but there is a difference in the manner of approach to the task and the methods used to attain the desired end.

There are special reasons why a country church should promote the pure worship of God. So many churches give one no sense of reverence or worship in their assembly. The songs are not inspiring. Too often they are neither poetry nor good rhyme. The music is light, frivolous, jazzy and tends neither to the love of God nor to His worship. In such a meeting there is no sense of God's presence, no consciousness of His holiness is stirred within the soul. The church must somehow by its worship keep alive in the consciences of men a deep sense of the fact that God is near and that He is holy. After listening to a very splendid address on the subject of cynicism, a great evil of this age, a friend said to the speaker: "Is not cynicism a symptom rather than the disease?" Surely the sin lying back of cynicism is a loss of the sense of God's presence in the lives and affairs of men. The service of worship must somehow bring men face to face with the Holy and Gracious God until they see themselves vile and unclean before Him and are made to cry for cleansing from sin and deliverance from its dominion over them. Something of this sort is a necessary antecedent to any great revival that will bring men into the Church of Christ and citizenship in His Kingdom. Such a revival will mean a better day for our nation and for the world.

A spirit of prayer must be cultivated in men's hearts. It may be true that men pray as much as men have ever prayed, and are quite as active in all religious exercises. But the man is faced with greater competition of interests for a place in his affections than ever before in the history of the world. Many and clamorous voices call men to follow after material benefits, and pleasures which satisfy the flesh. Scientific progress has made all these things more accessible, and high-powered salesmen are constantly urging their wares upon the attention of men. In consequence it is necessary to make use of all those exercises and means of grace which minister to the spiritual nature of man, and help him to master the appetites and desires of the flesh, and of his lower nature. The lures of the world are so great that there must needs be likewise a greater effort on the part of every individual to overcome the world. The farmer of to-day cannot compete in the economic world with those who use all the latest and best methods of agriculture, if he continues to scratch the ground with a forked stick and use only antiquated methods of cultivation. The church, too, must adapt itself to the people and the age of its active ministry. It must needs encourage men to pray in their homes, in the secret place and in the church. God's blessings always come upon a people who are earnestly seeking for them.

Christian Fellowship and Nurture. Fellowship means participation. Men need to learn how "to share each other's woes, each other's cross to bear"; "To rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with them that weep." Those who have this world's goods must learn how to share with those who have not, in a spirit of true Christian brotherhood. There is no more important task committed to the church than that of implanting this spirit in men. It is not sufficient merely to recruit new disciples; the recruits must needs be trained for Christian service. Men seek by various means to establish brotherhood. So strong is this desire for fellowship that men resort to numerous expedients to satisfy it. The church must train men in the practice of the principles of Jesus, and the work will not be complete until the world has become not a neighborhood merely, but a real brotherhood.

The church, and particularly the country church, should promote everything which pertains to community welfare. It may be an economic need to be improved by better farming and coöperative marketing. Then the church may easily relate itself to the agencies set up by the county, state and nation which in any way offer help to the farmer. The church which serves the people of the community will render service to God who cares for all men, and whose ear is always open to their cry of need, "and whose hand is reached out still."

The health of the community should concern very deeply the church of that territory. It is not a matter only of nursing the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for orphaned children, and all who are in distress of any kind. Of course, these things are to be done, but the conditions of health in the community may need attention. There may exist things which foster diseases and their spread among the people. These causes are to be removed and their removal is a concern of the people called Christians. The public health service of the state will coöperate in their removal and should be brought into service.

The stranger needs a kindly greeting and to be made to feel at home in his Father's house, and the alien races are to be bound together by the ties of Christian brotherhood. If race relations are bad, the church should be concerned to remove the cause of bad feeling, to allay the mob spirit and create a wholesome atmosphere in which all men may live and peaceably pursue their highest ends.

A spirit of neighborliness surely can and ought to be fostered by the church of the living God. It is often said that the most difficult thing for men to learn is "how to live together harmoniously." Surely the church has a gospel to preach and an exemplary life to live which will help men to govern their baser and more selfish passions and to "be at peace among themselves."

The conversion of the world is the mission of the church, in which every organization and branch should have some part and obligation. The great commission has not been repealed. The call is to rich and poor, to small and great alike. All have part in the enterprise, the mightiest ever undertaken by God or man. All races, languages, kindred, tribes and nationalities are included within the gospel privilege. Men sometimes see the task which is nearest at hand and do not look beyond that, while others overlook the opportunities and duties close by and think only of that which is farther away. Sometimes it is easier to find missionaries ready to go to Africa than it is to find those ready and willing to minister to the negroes who live in the same county. The church must cultivate in men the up-look toward God and also the outlook upon the whole world. No man for whom Christ died should be overlooked or forgotten.

The church is the representative of Jesus Christ to the world. To truly represent Him it must be like Him in life and spirit. It must have a membership living the life of Jesus in the flesh, and filled with His divine compassion for all. A church is not a true church which is not missionary, that is, filled with zeal to bear witness to His saving grace to all men. Do our churches remind men of Jesus or induce them to put their trust in Him for safety?

A Sample Round Table Discussion

Herbert Hoover in his Armistice Day address, November 11, 1929, said: "No idea can be perfected except on the anvil of debate."

In order to help the reader understand how the ideas of this book were perfected, you will find the following Round Table debate, which took place when Dr. J. W. Perry, had finished the above discussion on "Functions of the Country Church."

Dr. Warren H. Wilson (Director Town and Country Department, Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.) led off by saying: We have all been feeling that the vital issues of the churches are to perform many functions, even that of keeping the church alive. The great business of the church is to evangelize. The business of the church is also social. I have no doubt that the business of the church is to do practical community work. There are not many of us who are able to do that, so we say it is a bad thing to do.

My mind is coming more to dwell upon the subject of worship. We should pray more. But the exhortation to pray is not of much consequence unless we worship. We must be taught to worship God. Ascribe greatness and glory to Him. Worship is also private. *Methods of Private Religious Living,* by Wieman, should be read by every Christian. Many country and town churches do not properly worship God. Most of our hymns deal with the emotional side and how to get on with God. We need something that expresses personal worship. We must discard man and know God. This is the greatest function of the country church—of any church. Christ died for us, for me. We have been carried away by the humanistic conception of God. We should shed the whole business and worship God. I believe in all that Dr. Perry said, but I want to put it stronger. My idea is that we want to get down on our knees and pray, really worship God. A new note has come into America. What we need is worship, and what we need for our country churches is for them to learn to worship God.

Dr. Bridgman: Suppose we should go back to singing the Psalms and substitute them for some of the hymns, would that help?

Dr. Wilson: The Psalms would be a help. We should insist that most of them be made current with our people. We are inclined to put everything on a lower tension, even the hymns that we sing. The Psalms and a higher order of hymns would be a help.

Mrs. Seeds: Just how far should the church be concerned with the social development of the community?

Dr. Moore: Christ said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This puts social work on a plane with religious worship.

Dr. Wilson: We should not do any social work that anyone else will do. The church should confine itself to its spiritual offices. We should not do any social work that anyone else will do, but we should befriend and not criticize any organization or individual who does do it. If others will do it, it is not the job of the church. It must be done. If they will not do it, we must. There is nothing that releases us. Christians must include in their hearts the community, and we should not pick flaws in those who do not do things as we would have them done.

Dr. McLaughlin: Has the church not atrophied in its social functions?

Dr. Wilson: No. The minister is doing too many things. He is doing everything. There is too much social work done. The churches must limit their field of activity. The Jerusalem Conference has limited it to four or five things. Find out what are the proper directions of the church's activities.

Mr. Chalmers: I must disagree. We could preach "Love your neighbor as yourself all the year long," but we must be practicing what we preach. We may lay too much emphasis on the social side, but there is certainly a place for it.

Mr. Hanna: Jesus summed it up when He said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It is a big field. We must make the application for our own times. I particularly want to emphasize the fact that it is so easy to get country people to do neighborly deeds.

Dr. McLaughlin: Is not the church missing its evangelistic opportunity when it turns over its social work to other agencies? Of course the social service of the church should be Christian. The program of Jesus included it. In the past the church has frequently failed to function in this particular. Many other organizations have come into being which function merely as social service groups. In some quarters there may have been a tendency on the part of the church to degenerate into a social service club, neglecting its functions in worshiping, preaching and teaching; but that is no excuse for the church failing to function in Christian social service. It should not turn over to other organizations that which was part of the program of Jesus who went about doing good.

May I illustrate? A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, who robbed him and stripped him and left him wounded on the side of the road. He saw a man approaching, his heart leaped with expectancy as he said within himself: "Surely this man will take care of me and minister to my needs, for he is the preacher." But the preacher had an afternoon appointment down at Jericho and passed by. The unfortunate man looked up the road and saw another coming and as he drew near he recognized him as a deacon and he said to himself: "Surely this man will minister to my necessities, for that is the business of the deacon." But the deacon had other important matters and passed by. After a while he saw a third man approaching, and as he drew near, the heart of the victim of the robbers sank within him, for this man was not even a member of the church. He was an Elk. But the Elk looked upon him and had compassion, dressed his wounds, administered medicine, took him to the nearest hotel, paid his bill and said to the hotel keeper: "If there is any other charge, I will repay thee when I come again."

In due time this unfortunate man became well and prosperous. He moved up to the city of Jerusalem. He needed none to minister to his necessities. The preacher thought of him as one who would make a good church member and visited him. The deacon considered that he would be a valuable contributor and made frequent approaches. There was nothing doing! He was an Elk. The church had lost its opportunity to reach that man in failing to serve him while he was in need.

Mr. Stoner: What is the minister's distinctive work? We all agree that he is to preach the gospel. That is his work, if he loves God. All Christians are to give expression to their religion in ministering to the sick, the widow, the orphans, etc. My opinion is that a minister is making a great mistake to give his time to anything that is not purely religious. When he gives his time and attention to social service, he is departing from his work. What do you mean by social service? What is a minister's work to-day? Please define it.

Mr. Hanna: Christian social service is any form of service that will point a soul to Christ. There are two phases of Christian social service: (1) the recreational, that is, the play life; as the child plays, so will he live. If you can teach a child to play, you have fought a great battle for him. Guide the play life of the youth so as to make him a better Christian. (2) It seems to me that the Christian cannot do an act of service without doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The honor is to those who serve in the name of the Master, otherwise it becomes service for self-glory.

Dr. Mayo: I am deeply concerned about what the work of the minister is. Anything that concerns life concerns the minister. Religion is spiritual. The Master dealt with the whole body. The state taking things over does not relieve the church of them. I feel that the minister has the biggest job in the whole world. If you find a school in poor shape, get behind the leaders and make it a better one. Be a leader yourself, but put others to work. Let the church begin and move heaven and earth to see that things are done. Look after the individual, body, mind and soul. Live the gospel seven days in the week.

Dr. Perry: When I mentioned social service I meant something of this kind: In rural communities where the health conditions are very bad, why should not the minister bring about better conditions in that community? Folks can learn to play. That phase of social service is all right, but not so necessary as other phases. The church might direct the play, that is all right. But the church should make a better society in which people may live. If the farmers are growing the wrong crops, help them to find what is the matter. Get some people to go to agricultural colleges, get them in touch with the county agent and other agencies. Make a better community. Then you will help to build up the church. If you will help the Lord's people, you need not bother about your salary. He will take care of that.

Mr. Record. I was speaking of what the minister's distinctive work is. What we have been talking about is Christian social service, which is all right. But I take it that the minister's work is to preach the gospel.

Dr. McLaughlin: Our subject for discussion is the

"Functions of the Country Church" and not the functions of the country minister. It is difficult, however, to differentiate. I believe the business of the minister is to preach the gospel, pastor his people, promote worship, be a leader in the matter of religious education and to inspire good work and right living in his community.

CHAPTER VII

A COUNTRY CHURCH PROGRAM

C. MORTON HANNA

THE ultimate aim of the country church is the same as that of any other church, namely: to develop character by bringing the people to know Jesus and the Jesus way of living. Anything that will contribute to this aim is a function of the country church. For the purposes of this discussion the program of the country church will be considered under the four general heads of Worship, Preaching, Religious Education and Christian Social Service. No effort will be made to treat these phases of the church's program in a general way, but the effort will be limited to the discussion of the conditions existing in the country church that would either hinder or help the development of a well-rounded country church program.

WORSHIP

In the consideration of the first function of the country church—worship—it will be well for us to define the term itself. What is worship? Is it wonder? No, for the crowds and even the scribes and Pharisees wondered or marveled at the power, wisdom and goodness of Jesus, but only a few individuals truly worshiped him. Is it awe? No. We are awed by the beauty and atmosphere of some heathen shrines as truly as we are by the beauty and atmosphere of one of the magnificent cathedrals of Europe. What then is worship? The Bible would teach us that worship is the attitude of the soul, which is characterized by the *submission of the will* and the *consecration of the life* to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. True worship is expressed in meditation on the things of God, the reading of His Word, the pouring out of our heart to Him in prayer, singing His praises in songs and hymns, and giving to His church. But, fundamentally, worship is the bending of our wills to the Will of God, saying from the heart "Amen" to all of God's dealings with us. The public worship of the church should be one of the means of developing in the individual Christian a strong private devotional life. The language and forms of public worship should and do become the language and form of the private devotional life. This is one reason great care and effort must characterize the building of the program of public worship.

There are certain factors that are present in the country church that limit to some extent the development of public worship. First, there is the intense individuality of the country people. In the cities where factory organization and methods prevail, large groups of people tend to be poured into the same mold, but in the country the people work alone or in groups of two or three. Thus they are not used to group activities and it is therefore harder to develop them in group worship. The average country congregation does not enter into the responsive reading, the saying of the Creed or the praying of the Lord's Prayer with the same unanimity and smoothness as the town or city congregation. This is due to a lack of training in group activities rather than a difference in the intelligence of the two groups.

In the second place, the average country church does not have the so-called atmosphere of worship that is often produced in the city church by the architecture, lighting, decorations and music. Most of the country churches are very plain and, to the eye of a stranger, they are positively ugly. Lighting effects are rarely possible in the small rural church, decorations such as stained glass windows, mural decorations, beautiful woodwork and furnishings are beyond the financial reach of the average country church. Neither do these churches have the wonderful instruments or the gifted musicians that are considered so necessary in the city churches.

And third, the presence of a large number of children in the worship services of the average country church makes it much more difficult to produce the so-called atmosphere of worship. Yet I would remind you that in the Old Testament, wherever public worship in the reading of the Scriptures is enjoined, the leaders are specifically commanded to read the Word to the whole congregation of the people, the men, the women and the little children. Therefore, let us beware of excluding the children, even though their presence does make group worship more difficult. Dr. Campbell Morgan tells us that he learned his first lesson in reverence from seeing the older people in the church bow their heads in prayer and give earnest, reverent attention to the other parts of the service.

A fourth characteristic of the country congregation that hinders the development of the so-called atmosphere of worship is the natural conservatism of the people. They do not "take to" new things. Simple innovations like the saying of the Creed in concert, the Offertory prayer, the Amen, can be introduced into the worship only after patient and tactful work on the part of the leader. Any innovation in the worship is challenged immediately by the leaders of the congregation.

On the other hand there are some characteristics of the situation and of the people in the country that do contribute to the reality and beauty of worship in a country church. The first of these is the very atmosphere of the country itself. The sighing of the wind in the trees, the song of the bird, the beauty of the world about us and the peace and quiet of the country furnish just the proper setting for the service of worship.

The second contributing factor to the beauty and reality of worship in the country church is the contemplative nature of the country people. They spend much time alone and they are in the habit of thinking about the problems of life and consequently they have very definite, if sometimes erroneous, ideas in the realm of philosophy and religion.

In the third place, country people are usually very attentive to the service. In the city, man has to make a definite effort to shut out sound from his consciousness, and after a while he finds that he can work, think, and even sleep amid the noises of the city. So a city dweller may sit in a service and never hear the voice of the speaker. But the country man usually works in quietness and solitude, with the result that he is awake to every sound outside of himself, especially to the sound of the human voice. The country worshipers can, for this same reason, listen with pleasure to a longer sermon than can the city audience.

The country pastor is almost altogether responsible for the leadership of the public worship and as the leader he should strive toward certain definite goals. He should lead the people to the realization that the hymns are in praise of God, and, therefore, every one should take part in the singing. One very old lady in my congregation, though stone deaf, always follows the words of the hymn while others are singing and in this way she worships through the hymns.

The leader of a public prayer should endeavor to present to God the praise, aspirations and needs of the particular group before which the prayer is offered, in order that the people may pray with the leader. It is a great thing for the people to go away saying that the one who led the public prayer prays as if he were talking to God. In public prayer we should resist the temptation to preach to the people, but we should the rather pray with and for them. We should also remember that the private prayers of the people will be largely influenced by the public prayers that they hear.

The reading of the Scriptures is also an important part of the public worship. The passage selected should bring a message suited to the need of the group to whom it is read, and it should be read as the authoritative message of God. As God's message for the group, it should be listened to with attention and reverence.

The offering, too, should be made an act of worship and be given a place of dignity in the service.

The leader of the communion service should make every effort to contribute to the meaning of the service, by making it quiet, reverent, orderly and meditative. The communion service that is hurried often fails in its purpose, because the communicant does not have time to meditate on the broken body and shed blood of the crucified Savior.

If the minister is to lead properly the service of worship we can see clearly that he must make adequate preparation. A great deal depends upon his correlation of his materials and his securing the coöperation of the choir, deacons and ushers. The minister who goes into the pulpit without a carefully planned program of worship will find it hard to lead the people into a realization of the presence of God. The minister must first make spiritual preparation for the worship service by private prayer. It was after Moses had been on the Mount with God for forty days and forty nights that his face shone with the glory of God. So it will be only after the minister himself has been much in the presence chamber of God, that he can lead others into that presence.

PREACHING

The second activity in the program of the country church is preaching. The minister's discourse has always been given an important place in the country church, so much so that even to-day the people think of the church service in terms of preaching, rather than of divine worship or divine service. Therefore, we do not need to give preaching a more prominent place in the program of the country church, but rather the emphasis should be placed upon the quality of the preaching. The message of the Bible is couched in rural terms, and is, therefore, very easily adapted to the needs of country people. The minister should, however, be very careful that he employ the language of the people. A first-year student at the Seminary prepared as his first sermon a very learned treatise on astronomy and what it teaches us about God. It was filled with scientific data and long strings of figures. When he preached it to several country audiences it, of course, fell flat and he had a hard time understanding why. The trouble was that he did not begin where the people lived, he did not employ their language. However, even more important than the language is the subject matter. The sermon to the rural audience should deal with the problems of soul with which the people are grappling. Herein lies the great value of contact with the people in visiting. In the home with the people, the minister finds out what they are thinking and what their peculiar problems are, and then in his preaching he can bring to bear the message of God's Word directly on those problems. No absentee pastor can preach to the real spiritual needs of the people, because he cannot know what these needs are.

TEACHING

Perhaps the most urgent problem before the rural church of to-day is that of religious education. The state has made rapid forward strides along educational lines, but the rural church has not kept pace. There is a very real danger that the church will fall into disrepute with the young people of high-school training. It is very clear that if we, as a people, are to grow in our characters and spiritual life, we must do so by growing in our knowledge of the Bible. It is the task of the church to lead her members into this increasing knowledge of the Bible.

There are some conditions in the rural church that make the work of religious education very difficult. In the first place it is hard to secure group meetings in the country. Many country churches have neither a Sunday-night service nor a mid-week prayer meeting. Due to the problems of distance and of transportation, it is hard to get the people together for group instruction at times other than the Sunday-school hour. In most rural communities there is a distressing lack of trained leadership for religious education work. There are few of the professional class and even fewer college graduates. In many places in the South we have the opportunity to put the Bible into the public school, but it has been done to only a limited extent so far, because there is no one to do the teaching. The pastor already has more to do than he can get into his program.

But there are ample compensations for all of our difficulties. There are conditions in the rural community that help tremendously in the program of religious education. The first of these is the absence of distractions. It is comparatively easy to get the interest of the young people in the country, because they do not have the movie, the baseball park, or the gymnasium to take their time and attention away from the church. Thus, while they are usually busy, yet their leisure time is at the disposal of the church that is wide-awake enough to take advantage of it and fill it up with a worth-while program of religious education.

The second advantage lies in the fact that in the country the family is still a unit. In most country homes there is still the old-fashioned living room where the whole family meets for a bit of family life. They also meet together at meal times, and thus make possible the family altar around the breakfast table or the supper table. Perhaps the old-type family altar, where the father did all of the reading and praying has gone, but a new and perhaps better type has come in its place, for now around the table each member of the family, who is old enough, takes his or her turn in reading and leading the prayer. He is a wise pastor who encourages such a family altar.

This family group also makes possible the wide use of home work for the young people. The country parent will coöperate with the teacher in getting the children to learn the Bible, if the teacher will assign definite work. In this way not only do the children study the Bible, but the parents become interested and study with them. The Sunday school will never solve the problem of religious education until it begins to expect a large amount of home work from the pupil.

This brings us to a study of some definite types of religious-education work that have proved successful in rural churches. The simplest form of Bible study is to ask the people to read a chapter a day with definite questions in mind, and with a periodic check-up on the number who are participating. This will often start a lifetime habit of Bible reading. An occasional week of Bible study at night, led by the pastor, in which the people read a definite assignment for each night and answer certain previously assigned questions on the passage, stirs up interest. Then the pastor will close the study each night with an explanation and application of the passage to the people. Country people *will* respond to such a Bible-study class in the winter months when the nights are long and the farm work is not so heavy.

The Vacation Bible School is proving a great help in the country church. The country children seem to respond to the idea better than city children. It has been the experience of some that it is better to work intensively for a short period, two or three weeks, rather than to spread it out over a longer period. Thus the program can be heavier, and a great deal of home work can be expected of the children.

The country churches of Lexington Presbytery in Virginia have found that the children and young people respond readily to competitive games with Bible study as a basis. Thus, for two summers the game of Bible baseball has furnished the opportunity for combining Bible study with wholesome recreation.

Last, but not least, the dramatization of Bible stories and pageantry gets a splendid response from country people and can be used to great advantage to get over a message, both to those who take part and those who look on. This field of religious education offers a great opportunity to the pastor or religious leader who will enter it, for, as yet, in the country we do not have to compete with the movie or cheap show.

SOCIAL SERVICE

The fourth activity of the country church is Christian Social Service. This has to do with the social or recreational life of the people as well as with service to those in need. There is a great opportunity for the church in the country to center the recreational life of her young people around the religious educational program. The country youth does not have much group recreation and often the church can win his allegiance at first through his social activities. Every social can be made a spiritual service by closing it with devotional singing and a prayer; the hikes can be definitely connected up with the development of the spiritual life by having a "camp fire" with a devotional turn at the close. Some one has called our attention to the fact that work with the drudgery taken out is the highest form of play. Thus, by taking the drudgery out of our religious education and making it interesting we can accomplish two things with one effort. This is the result of such things as Bible baseball and Bible drama and pageantry.

The service end of the Christian Social Service program expresses itself in the rural church in the life of kindness and helpfulness lived by the people day by day. This should be the natural result of the program of Worship, Preaching and Teaching in the church. We do not have the service organizations in the country that we have in the towns and cities, so the service activities are more of an individual nature. If the church member will do his or her act of kindness in the name of and for the sake of the Lord Jesus, it will result in tremendous spiritual power, for it will bind the recipients of the service closer to the church. The aim of the church is to produce in her members the Christlike character and life, and the Christlike life is the life of loving service to all who are in need.

PART IV

PROBLEMS

CHAPTER VIII

UNITED CHURCHES SOLVE THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

William R. King

In the discussion of this subject we must first define the terms used. We must know what we are talking about. This is necessary in the consideration of any subject, but it is particularly so of this subject. Definition is fundamental.

United Churches Defined

There are two things we must be clear about in the very beginning—first, what do we mean by the United Church?

This cannot be answered in a word, for there are several kinds of United Churches. The ablest and most authoritative study of this subject has been made by Miss Elizabeth R. Hooker, one of the secretaries of the Institute of Social and Religious Research. She spent three years in a scientific investigation of United Churches, traveling extensively in all parts of the country. Her findings and conclusions have been published in a book under the title "United Churches," put out by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, and in an eighty-two-page pamphlet, "How Can Local Churches Come Together," published under the imprint of the Home

Missions Council. These two publications are the latest, and the most thoroughgoing studies we have upon the United Church. In them Miss Hooker has given us, with great ability, in great detail, and without bias or prejudice, the facts about United Churches and her conclusions.

She found in her investigations four kinds of United Churches:

A. The Federated Church—this type she defines as follows:

> A federated church is composed of two or more organized churches differing in denomination—which have entered into an agreement to act together as regards local affairs. The denominational units retain their own rolls, usually keep in the hands of their own trustees their separate property, and almost always continue to send benevolences to their separate denominational boards. They combine in calling and paying a minister, hold services of worship in common, almost invariably conduct a common Sunday school and frequently join in other local activities.

B. The Denominational United Church—this type she defines as follows:

> The term "denominational united church" signifies a church connected with a single denominational body that has definitely undertaken, or had allocated to it responsibility for the religious needs of a public not confined to one denominational group, and that includes in its membership—whether regular or associate—elements of different denominational origins. Members received from other than the official denomination are not required to surrender creed, form of baptism, or denominational loyalty.

> Denominational United Churches being easily distinguished in this way from the numerous denominational churches of the traditional kind have received a large proportion of their members by letter from churches of other denominations.

C. The Undenominational United Church—she defines this type as "An organized church, not connected with any denominational body. Such churches are often called 'Union' churches."

D. The Affiliated Church—she defines this type as

> A church that in freedom to form its own constitution and control its own local affairs resembles the undenominational church, but that is connected with a denominational body for certain specific purposes, usually including ministerial supply and distribution of benevolences. Persons from other denominations are received to full membership with equal voting powers.

Miss Hooker discusses each of these four types of United Churches, pointing out the strong and the weak points. She finds advantages and disadvantages in each. It is not necessary, for the purposes of this discussion, to go into the merits or demerits of these different types. It is very evident, not only from her study but from our own experience and observation, that there can be no standardized type of Union Church that will suit equally well all places. The kind of United Church must always be determined by a careful study of local needs and conditions. It is the principle of the United Church, not the particular form or type, that is important and for which I am contending.

There is still another form of united effort, which Miss Hooker mentions but does not discuss, that must be kept in mind in the consideration of this subject. That is "The Larger Parish Plan." This is a modern adaptation of the circuit system, with a diversified ministry, over areas as well as churches, operated on either a denominational or interdenominational basis. This, in many ways, and especially in the open country, is, no doubt, the best solution of the country church problem.

The second thing we need to make clear, by way of definition, is what are the country church problems?

Their name is legion. They are as many as the number of the country churches. Each church has its own peculiar problems growing out of the character of each local community. For the sake of brevity and conciseness, and for the purposes of this discussion, they may be combined into four general problems as follows:

How to maintain the existence of the country church.
How to reach the people in the country communities.
How to serve the rural communities.
How to cultivate worship and religion.

My contention is that some form or type of united church, as above defined, will best solve these four inclusive problems of the country church.

PROBLEMS DISCUSSED

Let us now consider these problems one by one.

How to maintain the existence of the country church. That the existence of the country church is in jeopardy needs no argument. It is a matter of common knowledge that the country church is struggling to keep its doors open; fighting for its very existence. Many country churches have actually died. Many others are in rapid decline. The rural church is fighting for its life. It is a serious question whether or not it can live at all in modern America.

Think for a moment what it takes to maintain a church. To keep the church alive and going in the country to-day we must have four things: people, preacher, property and program. I am not forgetting that "Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there he is in their midst," or that "God is not confined to temples made with hands," or that the spirit of God can work when and where and how He pleases. I am not discussing the theological aspects of the church. I am thinking of the church in the ordinary, everyday acceptation of it, and of what it takes to maintain its existence in a country community. The only way a country community can furnish these four essentials to the existence of the church in its midst is in a United Church of some type.

It is now pretty generally conceded by our church leaders, and it has been for some years the official judgment and statement of the Home Missions Council, that there should not be more than one Protestant church in a community of 1000 and less—the community being homogeneous as to language and color. According to the surveys made we have to-day in the town and country sections, on the basis of this standard, more than twice as many churches as we ought to have, or one church for every 463 people.

In our recent survey of New Hampshire, of the 222 town and rural sections of the state, not including the few large cities, 83 were found to be overchurched. The aggregate population is 118,510. The total number of churches 293, or one church for every 404 people.

There are 26 towns of less than 1000 population, each of which has three or more churches. An aggregate population of 18,644 is served by a total of 86 Protestant churches with 3284 members, or an average membership per church of 38. Seventeen towns in the state, exclusive of one-church towns, with a total of 8709 people, have 50 churches, or an average of one for every 161 persons. The average church membership is 26.

A recent letter said:

> We live in a beautiful rural section of western New York. In our village of ——, with a population of 1000 are four churches—Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist and Christian. The yearly cost of maintenance is $8000. We are commercializing our churches here by food sales, suppers, to raise money and entertainments for the same purpose. The women are using all their time and energy in these ways to meet the necessary expenses, with no time or strength left for furthering the spirituality of the church through personal work or for increasing the membership. As a result the pews are empty.

Such situations exist all over the country. There is no need to multiply illustrations—which I could do at great length. This condition is growing worse all the time.

Most rural communities do not have more than 1000 population. People are becoming fewer in the country every year. The drift to the town and city is slowly depopulating the country. It is the judgment of our ablest students of population trends that within a few years 75 per cent of our people will be in the cities. Not only is this drift to the city reducing the size of the rural population, it is changing the character of the country population and the country life.

The scarcity of people in the country and the financial conditions of the farmers are making it increasingly difficult to maintain the country church. There are not enough people, not enough financial resources and not enough capable leadership to support more than one church in the community with an adequate property, an efficient preacher, and a worth-while program. The old time "cracker-box" one-room church building with poor seats, bare floors, smoky stoves, oil lamps, and cobwebbed ceilings will not do to-day.

Furthermore, most of our country churches are either without pastors, or have only part-time preachers, because they are not able to support them. This is one of the most distressing problems of the country church. According to the Inter-Church World Survey there are 100,000 rural churches in the United States with only 60,000 rural pastors to minister to them. Only 40,000 of these are full-time men. Twenty thousand, or one-third of the number of rural pastors, are farmers, laborers, teachers or something else.

Is it any wonder, that, as a consequence, there is no program and no progress? How can such churches, poorly housed, poorly equipped, and poorly supported have any adequate, effective program, or make any headway in the community? It is utterly impossible. The blame is not always the preacher's. I have very little sympathy with indiscriminate criticism of the country preacher. My observation is that the country preacher is doing about as well, everything considered, as the city preacher. He is the victim of a set of conditions brought about by the overchurching of our country communities. There are too many churches with too few people, and too meager resources. To maintain the country church—just to keep it in existence—we must have fewer and better churches.

The small country church is too expensive in every respect. Dr. M. A. Dawber, Superintendent of the Department of Rural Work in the Methodist Episcopal Church says: "The effect of the small church is felt most keenly in the matter of finance." He refers to a survey made of three churches in Kansas, Hutchison, with a population of 23,928; Dodge City with a population of 5061; and Nekoma with a population of 75.

Hutchison First Methodist Church had a membership of 1275; Dodge City, 1150; Nekoma, 46. In the matter of the pastor's salary, it cost Hutchison $3.52 a member to pay a salary of $4500; it cost Dodge City $3.47 a member to pay a salary of $4000; it cost Nekoma $15.21 a member to pay a salary of $700 for half-time. It cost Hutchison and Dodge City 4½ cents a member to support the Bishop; it cost Nekoma 33⅓ cents. It cost Hutchison less than 30 cents a member to support a District Superintendent, and Dodge City 28 cents, while it cost Nekoma $1.22.

The smaller the church the heavier the cost of maintenance. Their overhead is too great. Like the flying machine, it takes 85 per cent of the power to keep it up, and leaves only 15 per cent of power to push it forward. We cannot afford it. We are wasting money. Everything else is uniting to-day in order to carry on. Business, schools, industries, institutions of all kinds are coming together in order to save their lives. The churches must get together or go out of business.

The second problem is: *How to reach the people in the country communities.*

The most discouraging thing in our whole church life is the astounding fact that more than half of the people of the United States are outside of any kind of a church—Protestant, Catholic or Jewish. In the recent survey of the state of New Hampshire, made by the Home Missions Council, it was discovered that 60.9 per cent of the people were not connected with any kind of a church and that only 15.4 per cent of the people are connected with any Protestant church.

A still more surprising thing is the fact that the per cent of church membership in the country communities is smaller than in the cities. A recent survey made of rural churches in Virginia by the Rural Sociological Division of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, with the coöperation of a committee of church and educational leaders and church boards, found that the per cent of white population enrolled as church members is 15.5 per cent smaller in the country than in the city. Furthermore, taking the country over, the smaller the community the larger is the per cent of unchurched. For example, in towns between 5000 and 2500, the per cent of church members is 24.3; in towns of 2500 to 250, the per cent of church members is 22.8; in the open country, which represents one-third of the rural population, the per cent of church members is 13.1. As the population of the community declines, the per cent of the unchurched increases. In a section of my own native state of Tennessee—the Cumberland Mountain region—comprising eleven counties, out of a total population of 138,000, less than 28,000 belong to the church. In a section of south-east Missouri, a region including 22 counties with a population of 350,000, only 50,000 belong to any kind of a church.

The country church is failing to reach the people. Why?

What is the matter? There are, of course, several reasons. The one chief reason is *denominational competition and sectarian rivalry in rural sections.*

The churches cannot compete with the world, the flesh and the devil, so long as they compete with themselves. Our greatest apologetic is unity and coöperation. Christ made this the supreme prerequisite of successful soul-winning: "That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." A competing church can never bring conviction and repentance to this modern world. Competition weakens the church, saps it of its spiritual life, robs it of its power, darkens its counsels, corrupts its motives, degrades its methods, and counteracts its testimony. Competition has been the prolific mother of unholy evils that have alienated the masses, and impeded the progress of the Kingdom. We can't deny it. We can't excuse it. We can't disguise it. Both God and man see through us.

One of the great lamentations of the church to-day is its inability to reach the young people. What is the matter with the young people? This question is heard on every hand. It is indeed a serious question. It is a subject about which we are getting, in my judgment, a good deal of "bunk." The trouble with the young people is their parents and their churches. How can you expect the average country church to attract our young people? What is there about it that would make the young people desire it? When we older ones were boys and girls the country church was the only social center we had. It was more or less our educational center. Not so to-day. Other institutions and organizations are supplying the wants of our young folks, the movies, the clubs, the schools, and other modern agencies. Our young people may live in the country, but their thoughts, their manner of life, their social and educational ideals are urban. They dress and act and think like city people; they read the same papers and books and magazines; they go to the same kind of schools; they see the same movies; they listen to the same radio; they have the same mass education, the same standardized way of living. Our young people are not going to attend our fine, modern, consolidated, well-equipped, splendidly housed coöperative schools five days a week, and then be attracted to our little, miserably shabby, country churches on Sunday.

To reach the young people of our small country communities we must have the impact of a united church. A strong, well-equipped, well-manned, well-programized, living, serving church would command the respect of our young people; would answer many of their criticisms, increase their interest in the things of the Kingdom and give them a vital, genuine respect for the church.

The third problem of the country church is: *How to serve the community.*

This is one of the outstanding failures of the country church. It is falling short in its social ministry to the rural communities. The average country church has no community vision—no community mindedness—no community program—no community equipment. It cannot say with its divine Lord: "I am among you as he that serveth." Too many have come to be ministered unto and not to minister. The church should be the center of the community life. It should furnish the moral, spiritual and social inspiration and leadership for community activities. I shall not argue this. It is self-evident.

My contention is that we cannot expect the country churches to render this service unless we bring them together in some type of coöperative, united effort. A serving church must be a living church. It must have something to give. It cannot give what it does not possess. Out of the fullness of its own life it must minister to the needs of the community. What can we expect in the way of service from the kind of country churches we have to-day? Poor buildings, poor equipment, small membership, inadequately supported ministry, without help, without budget, discouraged, disheartened, despairing, defeated.

The country church must have a strong, diversified ministry. A staff of workers, with specialists, adequate buildings and equipment, and proper financial support. We are expecting our country pastors to make brick without straw. There ought to be in every parish a minimum staff of three workers—preacher, religious educational director, a community worker. These things can be had in almost every rural community if we will unite our forces and resources and do team work.

The fourth problem of the country church is: *How to cultivate worship and religion.*

It can't be done by our present competitive system in these small places. There is nothing worshipful about the average country church. The buildings are not worshipful, the services are not worshipful, the spirit and attitude of the people are not worshipful. How can they be under present conditions? Discouraged preachers, discouraged people! All the unhappy and unholy flock of evils, arising out of our competitive systems, combine to kill the spirit of worship and crush out religion. To save religion in the country we must be more religious in our approach to the communities.

PROOF PRESENTED

That the United Church can best solve the country church problems is not a matter of theory or guess. It has been demonstrated. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

Dr. E. Tallmadge Root, Secretary of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, tells us that the first federated church of Massachusetts was effected at Shutesbury, in 1911, eighteen years ago. To-day they have 52 federated and united churches, successfully functioning. One hundred and twelve denominational units have entered into these unions: 45 Congregational Churches, 25 Methodist Churches, 21 Baptist Churches, 8 Universalist Churches, 7 Unitarian Churches, 1 Christian Church, 1 Friends, and 1 Independent. Fifty of these churches reported last year 8,400 members, an average of 168.

Rev. Kenneth C. MacArthur, Rural Secretary for the Massachusetts Federation of Churches, says:

> There have been only two failures in Massachusetts. The average salaries paid have increased from $1420 to $1650. The average benevolences have increased from $200 to $456. The general experience has been that the federated church brings better financial results—community harmony and improvements, and increase in church attendance and membership. In some cases the total membership is smaller after federation than before, but this is accounted for by the falling off in rural population.

He says of Conway, a farming town in Franklin County:

> If we compare five years of united work on the part of three denominations there with the five years

> previous, we find that the benevolences increased from $1200 to $3500, or nearly 300 per cent. The Ladies' Aid gained over 57 per cent; the minister's salary nearly 58 per cent; the church membership nearly 48 per cent; the Sunday school and Young Peoples' societies over 100 per cent.

These gains were due to the federated plan, and to able pastoral leadership, which the plan makes possible. These figures are all the more remarkable because, during the period of ten years the population of the town decreased from 1219 to 936.

Similar testimonies come from other sections, from states where the plan has been working for some years, like Montana, Idaho, Utah and others. There are to-day between 1500 and 1600 United Churches. The number is rapidly growing.

It is true that some United Churches have not succeeded. Some have actually died, others are "status quo." The same, however, can be said of churches that are purely denominational. The failures of United Churches, when they do fail, are not due to the plan itself, but to other things; to the mistakes in the type of United Church for certain kinds of communities, to interference of many kinds, both local and from the outside. By and large the United Church is proving to be the best kind of a church for the small rural community. The arguments brought against the United Church are not substantiated by the facts. That there are difficulties in the way we are frank to admit, but they are more apparent than real. Most of them are due to prejudice, denominational selfishness, unyielding officialism, church machinery, the desire for big reports and ecclesiastical prestige, etc. There are no difficulties in the way that the grace of God cannot remove.

We need not be kept apart to-day in these small places by theological differences. There are just as many and as radical differences of theological opinion within any one of our denominations as there are between the denominations. No man need surrender a single vital conviction in order to fellowship with people from other denominations in a united church. A bishop said to me, in discussing this subject: "We believe things in this section." Yes, but are they worth contending for? Can you justify the splitting up of little country communities into rival groups, thus weakening the church, hindering the progress of the Kingdom, and depriving the people of their real religious rights in order to allow the exploitation of non-essentials? We are splitting on minor matters. There is not a single saving truth or doctrine of Christianity that is in the exclusive keeping of any one denomination. No denomination has a monopoly upon the Gospel. There is not one essential, fundamental, saving truth in the possession of any one denomination that is not the common property of all. In all real essentials, in the things that matter, the things that save, we are one. It is the things that are not important that separate us. That is the tragedy of it. The scandal of Protestantism is, that we who are so essentially united are so non-essentially divided. Our denominational rivalries are belying our real unity. Many are feeling the spirit of Melanchthon's last words: "For two reasons I desire to leave this life: first, that I may enjoy the sight I long for of the Son of God and of the church in heaven; next, that I may be set free from the monstrous and implacable hatred of theologians."

Furthermore, the occasions for our denominational aloofness no longer exist as they once did. The things that drove us apart in former days have in the main passed away. Many of our denominations were accidents. Protestantism itself was not premeditated. Luther never contemplated starting another church. Wesley did not start out to found a new denomination. These men began by trying to awaken the spiritual life of the existing church and bring men into its fellowship. The same was true of other denominations in the beginning. Many of our denominations arose out of persecution or sectionalism, or from little remnants of the state churches of Europe, or because of linguistic differences, or from special evangelistic movements which gathered around outstanding leaders who emphasized some peculiar doctrine or practice. Most of our denominations came into existence legitimately and for worthy motives, and all of them think they did. "No sect has arisen in the Christian Church," says Dr. Barton, "without some provocation." But the occasions that gave rise to most of our denominations have passed away. There is no longer a need for the special emphasis once thought so important. For example, there is no longer any occasion for denominational divisions and rivalries across the Mason and Dixon line. That line and the occasion for it are things of the past. What difference can that invisible and forgotten geographical line make in Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists? We do not regard it in business; we do not regard it in education; we do not regard it in personal relationships; men and women fall in love and get married without stopping to locate that line; we are coming to regard it less and less in politics. Why should we regard it in religion?

The things we will gain by uniting our churches in the country are so much more valuable and worth while than the things we will have to give up that we ought not to hesitate. The time has passed for selfish individualism or little group clannishness. We are living in the twentieth century. We cannot drag our unholy rivalries into the light of this new day and expect to conceal their ugly forms. There are too many high-powered searchlights playing upon us. Business is coöperating, industry is coöperating, agriculture is coöperating, nations are coöperating—the church cannot escape it.

With apologies to Shakespeare, To unite or not to unite—that is the question:

> Whether 'tis nobler in the country to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous competition,
> Or by taking up arms against a sea of rivalries,
> By uniting, end them.
> That is the question.

CHAPTER IX

UNITED CHURCHES DO NOT SOLVE THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

J. W. JENT

PROGRESS in the promotion of rural welfare depends essentially upon sound diagnosis; the realization that the rural church problem is not only a rural life problem, but a twentieth-century *church* problem.

A "united church," as defined by Miss Elizabeth Hooker[1] is "an organized local group of Christians with a religious test for membership, combining elements, either regular or associate, originally different in denomination."

Such an organization may be a superb *social* agency. It may function in fine community life, *but* it is not the solution of the twentieth-century church problem in rural communities.

United Churches are unscriptural, unnatural and impractical—a threefold indictment which invalidates their claim as an ideal in the promotion of rural welfare.

In the elaboration of these defects, we have the logic of the negative argument:

UNITED CHURCHES ARE UNSCRIPTURAL—NOT NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

Rural life leaders should not allow their zeal for *unity* in community organization to blur their perspective in the differentiation of institutions. A church is *unique* in the conservation of personal religion. Since it is *religious* in its genius, its efficiency cannot be measured by the standards of a public school, a farmers' coöperative, or a community club.

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[1] *United Churches,* page 35.

A *real church* is a *divine institution,* not only *thought* out and wrought out by Jesus during His earthly ministry, but subsisting in the divine relation as a *spiritual* organism. As such, it did not *evolve* in the "trial and error" of human experience, or by the achievement of human effort. It is *disclosed* in divine revelation as a finished product, fixed for all time in structure and function, adequate for all kinds of communities, sufficient for any age.

The test of church efficiency is not, therefore, *social sanction,* but the norm of the New Testament, characteristics which identify it as the New Testament type, an approximation of the apostolic model in Personnel, Purpose, and Program.

The members of the Jerusalem Church "gladly received his word, were baptized: and . . . continued *steadfastly* in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:41-42). Members of New Testament churches are thus not only *saved* but *sound* in the faith.

United churches cannot conserve these characteristics because their organic genius is grounded in *compromise.* Sincere Christians, who correctly interpret their religious experience—the sovereign reaction of repentance and faith, the grace of God in the forgiveness of sin, the generation of a new nature in "the birth from above," submission to the divine will and surrender for service—not only *believe* but *know* something. They are *sound* in the faith because they have tested the plan of salvation and demonstrated the "ecclesiastical polity" which fits it. They cannot, therefore, *sanction* the program of a church which contradicts their own experience, without stultifying their conscience—a sin from which conscientious Christians instinctively draw back.

The tendency of United Churches to minimize and ignore the determining doctrines of Christianity (the inspiration and authority of the Bible; the eternal sonship, deity and atonement of Jesus; the universality and guilt of sin; the genius and structure of New Testament churches; the vital issue in the ordinances; missions and evangelism; Christian stewardship; and sane, scriptural eschatology), to reduce church life to the level of a social or ethical culture club, devitalizes and destroys their efficiency.

A large community-wide membership, a modern house of worship, a full-time, resident minister, purchased at the expense of spiritual paralysis, is a *fatal bargain,* a delusion and a snare.

Since deviation from the doctrinal norm of the New Testament mars the pattern, United Churches are not *real* churches. Instead of solving the rural church problem, they intensify and complicate it. A substitute cannot satisfy the hunger for genuine church life, or provide the constructive religious program a community needs.

The constituency of United Churches "perish for lack of knowledge," the sheep "look up but are not fed." The misguided people, caught on the hook of superficial sentiment, think they have a church; but the church problem persists because the church they have does not function. They are still in the religious woods, on the wrong road, institutionally lost.

The way out of this religious labyrinth is in the determinism of a New Testament Church; the discovery that it is not subject to the mandates of economy and convenience; the abiding realization that its genius is utterly exclusive, inflexible; that its principles persist in doctrinal integrity—a propaganda which is positive and *permanent.*

Let us not forget, then, that the rural church problem is, *primarily,* a twentieth-century church problem—the institutional conservation of first-century Christianity in the midst of modern life.

Since United Churches are *man-made,* compromise churches, they cannot conserve first-century Christianity. Their ministry must be shallow, inadequate and incomplete. They cannot command the favor of God because they are not loyal to His Word.

UNITED CHURCHES ARE ARBITRARY, ARTIFICIAL, UNNATURAL

A church, according to the New Hampshire Confession, is "a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word."

As defined by Dr. Henry W. McLaughlin,[2] it is "a band of believers functioning for Christ, giving religious opportunities to the people of the community in which it is located, and having a vision of the world task."

Whatever else it is, a church is thus a group, and as such, is essentially subject to the fundamental law of group integration and cohesion, formulated by representative sociologists, as follows:

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[2] *Christ and the Country People,* page 138.

"Any group or number of human individuals who cultivate acquaintance and mental agreement, and who, knowing and enjoying their own likemindedness, are able to work together for common ends, is a human society." [3]

In the elaboration of this point of view, Professor Giddings, my own great master in Columbia University, says: [4]

> Beginning with feeling, and always combining feeling with perception, the consciousness of kind is dynamic. It is a power, as well as that disciplined strength which fights victorious battles, or as that consciousness of weakness and demoralization which hastens inglorious retreat. Originating in society, it is a true social force, a product of social relations. It is always a socializing force, perfecting association and developing a social nature.

Perhaps the best statement of the principle, for our use, is that of Blackmar and Gillin: [5]

"A society is a group of sentient beings who are more or less alike, who recognize more or less clearly that fact, and who recognize common interests in their social relationships."

The integration and cohesion of a common faith in New Testament churches, is the "consciousness of kind," which these sociologists discriminate as the ultimate law of group life.

This law justifies the contention that Christians who work effectively together must believe alike, because the body of their belief provides the common objective in their work.

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[3] Giddings, quoted by Ross, in his *Outlines of Sociology,* page 69.

[4] *Descriptive and Historical Sociology,* page 302.

[5] *Outlines of Sociology,* page 8.

United Churches are not only *unscriptural;* they not only minimize, contradict, and violate fundamental principles in personal religion, but they are not scientific. They must be repudiated as psychologically and sociologically *unsound.*

Members of United Churches, especially the federated or undenominational type, are *not* "more or less alike," unified by a common faith. The dim "consciousness of kind," as Christians, is undoubtedly *absorbed* in the persisting consciousness of unlikeness, the *discord* of differences in belief and practice which cannot be forgotten.

If men will not, because they cannot, pool their social interests in a lodge, club, or political party, where the emotional reaction is minor; how can they be expected to pool in religion, with the emotional impulse at the maximum. The effort to arbitrarily effect such amalgamation is in defiance of dominating instincts, a psychological absurdity.

UNITED CHURCHES ARE IMPRACTICABLE

They are not the solution of the rural church problem because they do not work and never will. They are not only seriously defective but unstable. They tend to die or revert to denominational attachment. This is the judgment of recognized authorities. Witness the testimony of Miss Elizabeth Hooker:

> More than twenty unions that had begun as federated churches, had in 1924 either become denominational churches or had affiliated with the denomination more loosely; and at least seven unions that had once been federated churches had become denominational churches.
>
> Many leaders in the community church movement

> considered it unlikely that federated churches would maintain allegiance to two or more separate denominational bodies through the lives of a second or at least a third generation of the members.[6]

Miss Hooker says again:[7]

> On the whole, the difficulties in the undenominational church, from the very fact that it stands apart from any denominational body, have been found to be so great that it is not surprising that undenominational churches did not all function long as such. Many—more than can be counted in the absence of published data—fell into inactivity. Others connected themselves with a denomination.

Again:[8]

> Undenominational churches in town and country, lacking the supervision received by denominational churches, ranked comparatively low, when judged by the usual tests. Though the form most easily adopted by local people, they showed, in rarer instances, the ability to survive as an efficient organization.

In other words, they decline and tend to die.

The findings of this unbiased investigator are confirmed by the judgment of Dr. Charles B. Taylor, a well-known and highly efficient rural pastor. He says:

> There is strength in denominationalism—Christian organization for the purpose of cooperation in the formation and realization of definite religious policies, in the development of permanent and efficient leadership, and the distribution of opportunities and responsibilities for rendering Christian service.
>
> The inroads of evil are always made at the weakest

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[6] *United Churches*, page 59. [7] Ibid., page 78. [8] Ibid., page 287.

> point; and certainly no rural church fortifies itself when it cuts loose from the strength that comes with comprehensive plans and well-organized efforts under the foremost church leadership.[9]

Dr. Taylor cites an example at Ogden, Kansas, where the people of the village built a union house of worship. Everybody worked enthusiastically in building the beautiful stone edifice, but they never could agree on a minister, and so the project went to pieces.

I knew of a similar case in Chautauqua County, Kansas, near the country school which I taught in 1898. A union house was built by a group of big-hearted, public-spirited farmers, who thought they saw the way out of a bad religious situation. They formed a loose-jointed, undenominational organization to carry forward the program. A Disciples' minister, from the county seat (Sedan) preached for them a few months, then quit, because financial support ceased. The people lost interest and the project went to pieces. The last time I saw that house it was stored full of baled hay.

The difficulties and defects of community churches are summarized by Dr. Henry W. McLaughlin[10] as follows:

> They lack the cohesion of a common faith; there is no control over the teachings and there is a tendency to sink to the level of the lowest faith. Suppose there are some who deny the deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and other things dear to Christians. Some common ground must be found. All believe in making a good community. Thus it becomes a social-service group with only a social gospel, which is good as far as it goes, but it is not adequate. It has no fostering body to sustain

[9] Bricker, *Solving the Country Church Problem,* page 88.

[10] *Christ and the Country People,* page 138.

it in times of division or in times of need; and it is difficult to get the right kind of a pastor.

Finally, I find myself in hearty agreement with my beloved teacher-friend, Dr. Warren H. Wilson, who says:

> I am convinced, after observing many congregations, that nothing is gained by mongrelizing the Methodist Church with independency, or adulterating Baptist efficiency by the control of a bishop. The best thing a church can do is to be what it professes. Therefore, a congregation ought to serve the communion to which it belongs. Denominations are the best religious agencies we have at the present time (*The Farmers' Church,* page 262).

In conclusion, allow me to summarize, briefly, the negative argument: United Churches are unscriptural, unnatural, and impractical. They are not only fundamentally defective but arbitrary and unstable. They are not anchored to any great religious body, and they have no institutions—schools, hospitals, orphans' homes, etc—in the support of which they coöperate. They are detached from the great missionary movement of the world. They are, in short, purely local institutions, shut up to themselves, in a mere social-service program which cannot stimulate the deeper impulses of the spiritual life. The United Church movement is clearly a fad—the result of sincere but misguided sentiment, the foolish notion that a community can organize for worship just as it organizes for education, recreation, economic efficiency, etc. This notion misses the mark, as we have seen, because religion essentially involves dominating beliefs which divide, as well as unify. A sound community program must make a place for the grouping of those who believe alike.

If my contention is correct, United Churches must, sooner or later, take the logical line of development and become another denomination, or gradually decline and disappear.

If the United Church is not the solution of the rural church problem, then, what is?

Well, I am convinced, in the light of extended laboratory research, and many years of practical experience, that the denominational community church—a denominational church, committed to a community program, organized and equipped to minister to all the life of all the people—is not only the solution of the church problem in rural communities, but a fundamental factor in the solution of the comprehensive rural life problem.

Such churches are scriptural, New Testament churches. They are normal, natural and practical. They conserve all the values claimed for United Churches, with none of their weaknesses.

A generation of denominationally trained "Rural Engineers," who take to the pastorate of properly located rural churches, not only the skill of an expert in the technique of their task, but the passion of a crusader in the vision which inspires them, will solve the rural church problem.

CHAPTER X

THE RURAL CHURCH AND THE COUNTRY NEWSPAPER

JAMES I. FINNEY

There are three great institutions upon whose activities and intelligent direction the future of our civilization very largely depends. They are the Church, the School and the Press. In a broad sense they may be regarded as the real trustees of civilization. The church is concerned primarily about the moral regeneration and spiritual uplift of mankind. The school is engaged in training the minds and in developing character to the end that men and women may realize their fullest opportunities for life and service.

If the newspapers are true to the highest ideals, they have the same general objectives. They are just as vitally concerned that we shall build a better civilization, preserving the best in the old and sacrificing only those things that cannot contribute to the advancement of mankind.

There can be no minimizing the power of the press for good, or its potentialities for evil. It is difficult to exaggerate its responsibility. Wherever there is power, there is always an obligation. While the newspaper enterprise is both a business and a profession, it falls far short of its mission when it is not concerned about the promotion of the higher ideals of life or does not endeavor to contribute toward the advancement of the purposes for which we have organized and are supporting our churches.

There is, therefore, every reason why there should be the most cordial coöperation between the church and the press. I can conceive of no reason why this close relationship should not exist. There can be no rivalry or competition between the press and the pulpit. The leaders of our religious movements would, perhaps, be the first to concede that under modern conditions they could hardly succeed in their high endeavors in the face of a hostile or unsympathetic press. On the other hand, no newspaper editor or publisher would deny the contributions which the churches can and do make toward the many reform movements that are launched through the press of the country.

While, as stated, the churches are primarily concerned about man's spiritual development and future salvation, this program affords conclusive evidence of a recognition upon the part of our religious leaders that if the church is to occupy its peculiar field of service, it must concern itself about the everyday affairs of this world. It is impossible to draw an exact line of demarcation between the proper sphere of the church's activities and the field reserved solely for the press. That has been attempted time and again but with only varying success. We hear much these days about the separation of church and state and there is a disposition in certain quarters to deny the church any participation in affairs that may ultimately be the subject of state legislation. While recognizing the importance of the church, adhering primarily to its great purpose of spiritual regeneration and man's salvation, I am not ready to agree that the church should be denied all participation in matters of moral reform, social justice and general welfare. The church cannot be indifferent to social injustices or to those things that impede the progress of civilization, and render its highest service to mankind.

The church cannot hold itself entirely aloof from the great currents of human thought nor be indifferent to the problems which our complex civilization is increasingly presenting for solution. A program of church activities adequate for another age would, in this period of history, fall far short of meeting the legitimate claims upon the church for real service to mankind.

A Rural Challenge

The great problem of the church to-day, is in the rural communities. The tendency toward the urbanization of our nation, its industrialization and the steady drift of population from the country to the city has created a real challenge for the church. If the church is to meet this challenge, its ministers in the rural charges must have a genuine understanding of the problems of the people among whom they live and whose servants they would be. Their attitude must be entirely sympathetic. Many of our rural churches are threatened with slow starvation and ultimate extinction. The Christian religion is the basic foundation upon which rests our civilization. We cannot conceive of the development and advancement of this great republic of ours without the vitalizing influence of Christianity. Aside entirely from the religious point of view, the decline of our rural churches would be nothing short of a calamity. The churches occupy a place in our social scheme that can be filled by no other agency. Moreover, we know that proximity to churches and schools is a vital economic factor in every rural neighborhood. A community whose church doors were closed would not be a desirable place for any family. This is recognized even by the most irreligious man who would never purchase property or establish a home for the rearing of his children in a community deprived of the cultural and spiritual benefits that flow alone from the church of God.

Whatever their religious views or lack of Christian virtues, our newspaper editors and publishers readily recognize their own vital interest in every movement calculated to reëstablish and revitalize the rural church. Even from the purely selfish and material standpoint, they cannot be indifferent to the necessity of doing all within their power to save the rural church from decay. Should they neglect any opportunity to accomplish this result, they would find themselves without that invaluable ally which is absolutely essential for the consummation of any program looking toward the betterment of social and economic conditions.

Not by Bread Alone

The newspapers must realize that without live, virile church organizations, functioning at a high degree of efficiency, their best effort to promote that ideal civilization which should be the ultimate object of all their efforts, will be partially paralyzed. There is no more impressive truth recorded in Holy Writ than that man cannot live by bread alone. All history verifies this statement; human experience emphasizes its eternal verity. Man must have some spiritual nourishment and that he cannot obtain otherwise than through some religious organization. It is impossible to promote a better civilization and advance those causes that are dear to the heart of every editor who has a true conception of his obligation, without having regard for the contributions that the churches make to every righteous cause.

For these reasons there should be always evident the finest spirit of coöperation between the press and the church. This can be accomplished without either yielding any prerogative which it may rightfully claim. As the joint trustees of civilization, each must recognize the peculiar field of the other and each must be willing to yield something to the end that the great objective of both may be advanced.

NEW ATTITUDE OF APPRECIATION

There has been no more gratifying feature in the development of the press than the changed attitude of the church toward it. When that first of all great newspaper reporters, James Gordon Bennett, began to publish church news in his New York *Herald,* he was bitterly excoriated by the clerical leaders. They resented what they regarded as an unwarranted intrusion into their own exclusive field of service. Happily this attitude has long since changed. Now the intelligent church leader recognizes the importance in the advancement of his cause of the contribution of the press. He is ready to lend every facility to the newspapers to the end that they may contribute to the dissemination of all religious and church news.

There are, however, still many ministers who do not fully appreciate that they have in the newspapers an agency for extending their activities, advancing the cause of the church and promoting the Kingdom of Heaven in this work, that is susceptible to large use. The pastor who neglects his home newspapers is missing one of his greatest opportunities for promoting the cause that he serves. Wherever our rural preachers fail to make use of this medium, the church must ultimately show signs of neglect.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PREACHERS

The absence of church news in the rural press is not always attributable to the indifference of the local editors. On the contrary the fault is more often than otherwise that of the preacher. The rural pastor does not always realize the limitations under which the average small town newspaper is edited and published. If he could only appreciate fully the limited facilities which these mediums of popular thought possess, he would give a measure of coöperation that he does not now always give.

In the great majority of the rural newspapers, the editor has to perform duties that are divided among a half score or more of individuals in the modern metropolitan daily newspaper office. I speak from experience, having been the greater part of my life, the editor of a rural newspaper. I know that in such organizations the editor must gather, write, edit and sometimes assist in putting in type the local news items. In addition, he is business manager, bookkeeper, collector, advertisement writer and proofreader. More often than otherwise, he is an active member of one of the local churches. He is thoroughly familiar with all the activities of his own church but he hesitates to publish them as news, although mindful of their value, lest he be criticized for partiality. He has no adequate facilities for obtaining the news from the other churches, hence there is an absence of this character of news from the columns of his paper. It would be time well spent if the rural pastors would recognize this fact and give to the local paper any item of interest to their members.

THE EDITOR'S DIFFICULTIES

Very often, when the rural editor does essay to cover church news, his efforts are resented because of the errors that under the circumstances enumerated above are almost inevitably made. For example, he very often speaks of a Methodist convention, a Baptist synod, a Presbyterian conference or an Episcopal general assembly. He is liable to record the election of the officers of a Methodist Episcopal church by a congregational meeting or speak of the official board of a Baptist church having selected delegates to its state convention. He cannot be familiar with the peculiar forms of worship, the different modes of church government or the distinctive polity of each separate organization. If he had a little assistance from the pastor or pastors, if they only manifested the same zeal to get their church activities before the public that the editor does in his endeavor to print the news, these ridiculous errors could be largely eliminated.

Of course, there are editors in the small towns and rural communities who have no real appreciation of the value of church news. They make no effort whatever to satisfy that large majority of their readers who, however lacking they may be in giving evidence of the possession of Christian virtues in their daily walks of life, are nevertheless not lacking in appreciation of or loyalty to the church. It is a remarkable and significant factor and one which we cannot disregard, that whatever man's shortcomings may be, he possesses a strong sense of loyalty to some religious organization. Not infrequently one of the vilest sinners in the community will be the very first to resent anything in a newspaper that he construes as a reflection upon the church of his choice. Every experienced newspaper editor can furnish abundant evidence of this fact. There is no loyalty any more intense than that of a man for his church. He may have wandered far afield from its teachings. In his daily life he may conform but little to its fine precepts. He may be false in word and deed to the noble ideals which it has sought to instill within him, and yet he will shed his blood in defense of any assault that may be made upon it. The intelligent newspaper editor recognizes this fact and, hence, he appreciates the value of the news which emanates from an organization that in some way or other touches the thoughts and aspirations of almost all his readers.

Not an Urban Problem

I have been discussing the relations that ought to obtain between the rural press and the country church, for there our religious problem is most acute. As a rule, we find in the secular newspapers published in the centers of population, the fairest and most impartial mediums for the publication of religious news. In politics, in business affairs and even in the social realms, I confess that there is some justification for the charge that the secular press sometimes colors and suppresses the news. But this most assuredly is not the case when it comes to the printing of church and religious news. The average metropolitan editor has a very high appreciation of the value of items of this character. He may not even be a member of the church and not infrequently he has no clearly defined views upon theological questions, but he is seldom blind to the fact that in this country a very large majority of the leaders and the patrons of his paper are members of the church. Moreover, he knows that more than nine-tenths of the people in the community he serves, whose good opinion is worth having, are more or less actively affiliated with and generally interested in some church organization. Then, therefore, for purely material reasons he is glad to open his columns to the churches. Even from purely sordid motives he is quick to recognize how important it is that he give his readers information about that institution which, despite all of its shortcomings and failures, must continue to be the real foundation upon which we build our civilization.

Magic of the Printed Page

Ministers do not always realize that there is a sanctity about the printed page that does not always attach to oral utterance. Without entering into a discussion of the question of whether or not oratory has declined in recent years, we know that, despite the radio and the lecturers, people are more influenced by what they read than by what they hear. It is not an unusual occurrence for a member of a congregation who heard a sermon to express surprise and gratification at its high quality only after he had read the discourse in his favorite newspaper. He very often misses entirely the points in the most excellent deliverance of his preacher until his attention has been called to them by some one who read the sermon in the newspaper. To many the printed page still speaks with an authority that prophets in the pulpit or on the platform do not have. Whether or not this is a fortunate circumstance, it is not necessary here to say. The fact that it exists should be a sufficient challenge for the preachers to avail themselves of the press in their high endeavors to promote the Kingdom of Christ in this world.

Dual Challenge

In this age when materialism threatens to engulf all the finer things of life, when there is a constant tendency to inculcate into the minds of the people the erroneous doctrine that the accumulation of wealth is an end in itself, surely a great challenge comes to the press and to the church. If we are to preserve and to promote those noble elements that have made us a great and a strong people, we must increasingly recognize the obligations that rest upon the newspapers and the pulpit. This challenge should cause those of both professions to rededicate themselves to the service of the public.

Splendor of the Goal

As a matter of fact the United States has that which no other nation in the records of time ever had, the opportunity to develop an entirely distinct civilization because it will be the first ever based on the general well being of mankind. Because of the systems of government which they knew and the grossly inequitable and unfair distribution of material comforts, all past civilizations have had their foundations largely, if not entirely, erected upon social or intellectual inequality. We know that this was true of the Egyptian, the Hellenic and the Roman civilizations. It was emphatically true of the civilization of Medieval Europe and to a lesser degree of even that of more modern Europe. Because in all these civilizations the great masses of the people have been dependent upon, if not subject to, a superior or governing class.

This is manifestly not true of our civilization. Here under our benign institutions, we guarantee equality of opportunity regardless of the circumstance of birth or lack of wealth. By reason of the universal well-being of the American people, we have for the first time the opportunity to make our civilization a really democratic thing. It will not rest upon the unrequited toil and abject subjection of the great body of the people, but all will have an equal chance for acquiring culture, knowledge and the development of those spiritual qualities that make for true nobility of character.

This fortunate circumstance is at once a subject for congratulation and a great challenge. It is the most pleasing prospect ever unfolded to the eye of the prophet. If we of the press and pulpit prove true to our inheritance and meet the great responsibilities of our task we can create the first civilization that holds a real promise of enduring. Is it not a magnificent prospect to vision that future America when there will be no evidences of any class distinction, when men in all walks of life, and regardless of the manner by which they earn their daily bread, will be enlightened, educated in the finest acceptation of the age, cultivated mentally and spiritually, all as one in appreciation of those creations of master minds that make life a thing of beauty and joy?

Toward this high mark we of the press and the pulpit must direct our noblest efforts. This vision of America's future should inspire us and increase our zeal toward the consummation of those laudable objectives that we can jointly share. If we meet this responsibility we can increasingly contribute to the development of this ideal civilization. And when that civilization has become the perfect thing that we envision, then indeed will bigotry and hate and malice and lust and, in short, man's inhumanity to man, vanish from the face of our land. Then indeed can we seriously set ourselves to the task of disarmament, for when our individuals do right for the sake of right and not through the fear of the consequences of their evil deeds, governments will no longer rest upon force and we can, in good conscience, invite all the other nations to meet us in the parliament of the world. Righteousness exalteth a nation and when our constituent members have become truly civilized then will this nation be exalted to the highest pinnacle of power and perfection and be truly an example to all the world.

Not by Law Alone

I would be lacking in candor if I did not, upon this occasion, warn my friends of the ministry against the dangers inherent in the increasing tendency in this country to find in legislation the remedy of all the evils of which we complain and the solution of all the problems which constantly vex us. There is a limit to the efficacy of legislative fiat, a fact which unfortunately many of our well-meaning ministers do not always recognize.

Our safety from the perils that threaten our democratic system of government, lies not in strengthening the legislative arm, but in arousing that sense of civic conscientiousness that should prompt men to loyal service to the state because it is the only guarantee of peace and order and the only anchor of safety for our liberties, both civil and religious. Our laws, even when they are wise, just and necessary, are not automatically self-executing, so that the wisest form of government can function only in proportion as it is guided by the wisdom, the unselfish devotion and the patriotic zeal of those who are charged with its responsibility. Under our system this responsibility rests upon the electors. It is an obligation that cannot be shirked by any citizen no matter how far he may be from cherishing any ambition for public place or power.

The evils of which we complain in government are directly traceable to indifference for and neglect of our civic obligations. Democracy is a noble idea. It is perhaps the loftiest conception of the philosophy of statesmanship. It is designed, as a recent president of our country said: "To maintain in perpetuity the rights of the people, with the ultimate extinction of all class privileges." Surely this conception of government harmonizes ideally with the fundamental principles of the Christian faith. Now, would it not be better if the men of the press and the pulpit, instead of devoting their major energies to a discussion and an agitation of laws and yet more laws, would harmonize their differences upon the broad platform of bringing about, through their joint efforts, that lofty conception among the people of their duties, responsibilities and obligations as the sovereigns of this great republic and the guardians of civilization?

A Common Aim

We of the press and of the pulpit have peculiar opportunities to elevate our citizenship and to ennoble our civilization. We can testify to our appreciation of these opportunities only through unselfish services. If there is any rivalry between the press and the pulpit it should be the result entirely of a commendable zeal to surpass each other in the achievement of those things that will bless mankind and preserve for those who come after us the faith delivered unto the saints. There is no sacrifice that we should not willingly make, there is no effort that we should not generously expend, if by doing so we can leave this world a little better for our having been a brief sojourner here. There can be no higher ambition to actuate man, whether his place in life be among the mighty or in the humbler walks, than to desire to so live that those who come after will remember him for the good that he wrought upon the earth.

Let us, as editors and as ministers, unite the forces and powers of our noble callings in the single purpose that, according to the light which God gives us to see, we shall daily endeavor to be worthy citizens of this republic, valiant members of the church militant and worthy heirs of the church triumphant.

PART V

PREACHER

CHAPTER XI

THE COUNTRY MINISTER

JOHN C. SILER

The successful country minister is not a martyr who is pouring out his life in a vain effort to restore the country church to life and vigor. He is not a hero who is performing spectacular deeds amid harsh and perilous surroundings. Nor is he the screenings of the ministerial calling winnowed out by the city church's process of selection. The country minister is a man of God who, in the pursuit of his ministerial calling, finds himself through providence, through his own individual choice, or by the will of a bishop the pastor of a country church or group of churches. It is this plain country preacher who is engaging our thought at this time. Let us not think we are wasting valuable time in thinking about the life and work of this man, for no man is doing a greater work for the Kingdom of God and for the nation than this splendid, stalwart Christian minister in the open country.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A COUNTRY MINISTER

Perhaps it is best to approach this subject by thinking first of the qualifications necessary for a successful country minister. We shall consider these qualifications under the two heads of natural and acquired.

Not every sort of man can make a success in the country pastorate. There are certain natural endowments that are essential. The first of these is physical strength. The country is no place for the anemic preacher. A strong and vigorous body is to be greatly desired and cultivated by the man who would take up the work of his ministry in the country. He may have to push his own lawn mower, hoe his own garden, preach two or three times each Sunday, teach in the Sunday school, make long trips in visiting his congregation, and do a multitude of other things taxing to the physical strength. When he is worn and weary by his many exertions his people will hardly understand why he should be tired.

He must be a man of mental power and ability. The inferior intellect has no place in the country ministry. The country people to whom he ministers may not be highly educated or cultured, but they will be people of good minds and many among them will be thinkers. He will need all the mental vigor he possesses in solving the various problems that will arise in the course of his ministry. Let it be said too that the country people know good preaching and demand it. We may be provoked with the small country church that wants a five thousand dollar preacher on a five hundred dollar salary, but this indicates the sort of preaching that will alone satisfy the country congregation. The mind and the heart of the countryman is calling for food from his preacher. The country is giving a call to the best minds in the ministry.

He must be a man of common sense and of understanding heart. The country people do not take delight in a minister who is impractical. The visionary student has no place in the country. A little thought will show the reason for this. That peculiar gift of understanding folks is a prime asset for the country minister. Country people like to be understood. If they are in any way different from their city cousins, they like their pastor to understand the reasons for their being different. There are sound reasons for this difference—a difference that should be maintained. I do not believe the solution of the country problem lies in the complete urbanizing of the country people.

As we are speaking of the personal qualifications of the country minister we must not fail to mention the greatest of all—his Christian experience and Christian character. The country people want in their parsonage men who are consecrated, devout followers of Jesus Christ. They want men whose lives adorn the doctrine they profess and the calling they pursue. The country church has not always gotten its dues in this regard. This ideal country minister is no ordinary man. Nature and grace must do much for him to fit him for this great work.

We turn now to think of his acquired qualifications. Nature and grace lay a firm foundation upon which must be built the superstructure of an adequate preparation. The country minister must have all that the city preacher has in the way of preparation, and some more besides. As an additional equipment he must know country life, country conditions, and country problems. His success as the spiritual leader of his people will depend to a great extent upon his knowledge of the country and its people. It may be foolish, but country people will not listen with any great respect to a man expounding the Scriptures who does not know the difference between a jimpson weed and a tomato vine. He cannot be a pastor with an understanding heart unless he knows the peculiar problems and conditions of the countryside, and their effect upon the lives of his people. Possibly the church has not made the progress it should in the nation because it has not prepared the way of the Lord.

To know the Bible and theology is not a sufficient equipment for the work of the ministry. The preacher must know man, his spiritual, his social and his economic problems. The fact is that the social and economic conditions have a spiritual basis which must be understood if the church is to meet the needs of man. This leads me to say that our theological seminaries should include in their curriculum a study of practical economics and sociology for the purpose of fitting the student to become an understanding and sympathetic pastor. Each student in our seminaries should have the opportunity of studying in the light of his calling the social and economic problems of both city and country so that he can intelligently decide where best to devote his ministry. This would enable our young ministers to enter upon their work with an understanding of the living problems of their people whether in city or country. I see no reason why a city boy cannot become a valuable and efficient country minister. There are doubtless students in our seminaries coming from the cities who have all the qualifications for a brilliant ministry in the country. Because a man is born and reared in the city should no more disqualify him for the country ministry than to be country bred should disqualify for the city ministry. The country ministry is open to all who can qualify.

THE TASK OF THE COUNTRY MINISTER

The fundamental work of the country minister is just the same as that of the city minister. We are in danger of forgetting that the ministry has a definite purpose. The point wherein the country ministry differs from the city ministry is not in its definite purpose, but in the things necessary to be done and in the methods to be used to make this purpose effectual. The work of the ministry everywhere is to preach the gospel of redemption through Jesus Christ. He is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. He is the preacher warning against sin, calling to repentance, building up Christian character, and bringing comfort to the hearts of his people. The function of the ministry is spiritual. It is needed just as much in the country as in city.

The country preacher is all of this, but he must be more. If his work in the gospel is to become a source of power, he must unite himself with the community as one with the people to whom he ministers. A country minister must be a countryman among country people. He must share their lives, enter into their activities and lead the way to a better and finer country life.

Upon the country minister falls the heavy task of training the leaders of the church. The crying need of the country is leadership in both church and community life. The minister can do no better work for church and community than to develop in his people the qualities of leadership. He must be his own director of religious education. This in itself is becoming a formidable task for the country minister, but the future of the country church depends upon the faithfulness with which he enters upon this work. He must understand the importance of the modern emphasis on Christian education if his work is to be constructive and lasting. When the country people develop leaders from among themselves, they have gone a long way toward the solution of their problems.

But this country minister must be a community builder as well as a church builder. Churches thrive as communities thrive. Churches progress as their communities progress. It is next to impossible to have a live church in a dead community. It is impossible to have a rich church with its benevolent possibilities in a decadent agricultural community. A country minister needs to be interested and concerned with its material development; he may need but to show his interest in the plans and methods of improvement leaving the promotion to those in whose hands it properly belongs. But I can conceive of conditions under which the country preacher could render valuable service to the Kingdom of God by preaching some sound orthodox sermons on community development and agricultural methods.

Any enterprise, any organization that has as its aim the betterment of the community should have the hearty and active support of the country minister. The Civic League, the Farmers' clubs, the school league, the public school and all such organizations should have a place in the time and attention of the minister. His church will not suffer by this divided allegiance.

THE OBSTACLES OF THE COUNTRY MINISTER

Let us not think that the country minister sails upon a calm sea with neither rock nor storm to hinder his progress. The country minister is often discouraged and heartsick. There seem to be so many things to frustrate his plans, and his cherished ideals are never attained.

One of the things that makes the country work hard is its isolation and loneliness. The country minister feels that he is out of things. Reading of what his brethren are doing in the county seat, he feels that he has no part nor lot in it though the small city wields a mighty influence over his work and congregation. It is seldom that he sees the face of a brother minister, or hears the voice of a stranger in his pulpit. He longs for this association that broadens life, but so far little has been done to take away his isolation. A country ministerial association is a blessing to the country preacher, if he gives it his hearty support.

Things move slowly in the country. The things the enthusiastic minister would accomplish for the growth of his work must first of all overcome the inertia of the rural mind. By the time this is accomplished he is ready to move or too discouraged to go on. The country minister must learn to labor and to wait. We make haste slowly in the country, but a patient leadership will accomplish wonders. Country people are ready to follow a leadership that is not too far ahead of their thought, and great things may be done in the course of years that cannot be accomplished in a one or two-year pastorate.

I am inclined to believe that more country ministers are harassed by financial problems than by any other thing. Country churches, as a rule, do not pay salaries in proportion to the overhead expenses of doing the actual work in the field. It is this overhead that worries the minister. He has salary enough to provide sufficient food and clothing for himself and family, but the automobile that is so necessary in his work is an ever-increasing burden. I wonder if country people ever realize that every pastoral call has added to the expense of the minister. Gas, tires, and the multiplied other expenses that go along with the operation of an automobile decrease the pastor's living salary until it is by the sorest economy that ends are made to meet. Then many a country minister is sick at heart because there is no money for the books he longs to own and read and for the journals that would keep his mind and heart alive. The impoverished sermons of many country preachers are a financial necessity. We need to awaken to the fact that it is sometimes a costly privilege to be a country minister.

Still another thing that breaks the country minister's heart is that he must be content with doing average work. There are so many things to take the time of the country minister that he cannot do his best at anything. He awakens some morning with a glorious idea for a sermon and with the hope of a good morning in the study to develop it, and arises to find that the bean beetle has struck the garden and some sick parishioner ten miles away requires his attention. It is hard to preach a sermon when you know it is not your best. It is hard to labor under the consciousness that your pastoral work is being only half accomplished. It is painful to see the weeds take the garden. This is the lot of the country minister.

THE COMPENSATIONS OF THE COUNTRY MINISTER

We need to look at the dark side lest some should be deceived by this great calling, but I would not have you think that the life of a country minister is dark and dank and drear. I am sure that no other service can hold any greater satisfactions than those that come to the country minister.

I think one of the greatest satisfactions of the country minister is the privilege of dwelling in the open country and going his rounds under the blue sky and feasting his eyes upon the lovely landscapes. He is close to nature and his spirit rises up to nature's God.

Another satisfaction is the sense of an adequate and important task. The country people need the gospel with its message of deliverance and comfort. Like the Master he has left the busy streets and has gone into the villages to proclaim the Word. The nation needs the Christian country people, and the Kingdom of God will not be complete without them.

The country minister has the satisfaction of ministering to the needs of his people. Across the country fields walk the same sin and the same sorrow that stalk the city streets. There are broken hearts to be bound up, there are deeds of mercy to be done, there are prodigals to be rescued, there is the Kingdom to be proclaimed. He follows his Lord as he goes about doing good, and the peace in his heart is an adequate compensation.

The country minister has a big place in the hearts of his people. He is a member of every family in his congregation. He is enshrined in the affections of his people. His life touches their lives, he blesses them and they in turn bless him with a loyal and true-hearted devotion. Happy the country minister who has won his way into the hearts and homes of his congregation and community.

I have tried to reproduce the picture of the ideal country minister as it has hung for years in the gallery of my heart. I have not attained to it, indeed, I seem to fall farther away from it as the years go by; but I have the joy of knowing that there is arising in our land a country ministry that will be all and more than my picture contains. These devoted and trained country ministers will bring to church and nation the greatest blessing God can give in a happy, contented, Christian, rural people.

CHAPTER XII

TRAINING OF THE RURAL MINISTER

F. D. Goodwin

When a man devotes himself to a particular vocation in life, he merges a great deal of his individuality into that vocation. The circumstances of his calling become his environment. The two can hardly be separated. The doctor merges into his practice, the lawyer into his profession, the minister into his ministry.

Of the rural minister this seems almost doubly true. Nature herself conditions many circumstances of his work. Economic laws, which he can hardly analyze, much less control, determine the situation in which he finds his people and himself. And when to these determining factors there is sometimes added the fiat of superior church officials, it seems that there is little freedom left, and the customary rut is the easiest and safest way of procedure.

Now it would seem wise in the consideration of the subject of the rural minister to deal first with those phases of his vocation that his rural environment determine for him, and then to consider the ways whereby he can rise above his environment, and change conditions about him into something after the pattern of God's Kingdom on earth. The man need never be fixed, though the conditions of his rural ministry may have certain distinct characteristics that will fundamentally determine the methods of his work. So first we will look at some of the particular characteristics of the rural ministry which make it a distinct field of labor—that set it apart as a specialist's job.

In a recent bulletin issued by the Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church, Mr. Ralph S. Adams presents two sets of differences between city life and the city ministry, and country life and the country ministry. It seems to me that his statement is a helpful one, for it brings out clearly the unique conditions under which the country minister has to serve; and these conditions determine not only the methods of his ministry but also should be considered in planning his course of preparation.

COUNTRY LIFE CHARACTERISTICS

First we list those differences that are inherent in country life. We can't change them. They are there, and we have to adapt ourselves and our work to them.

1. A single occupational group with common interests. This is in many ways an advantage.

2. Natural conservatism of rural folk. This often makes it difficult to initiate new work or new methods; but with this conservatism goes a deep-seated loyalty to the church and minister, once their confidence is won.

3. Seasonal adjustments of activities and programs, such as: the Daily Vacation Bible School and Week-day Religious Instruction.

4. Problems of church finance, dependent upon seasonal returns. Studies of the United States Department of Agriculture show that only one-third of the farmers are making a "plus" labor income.

5. Inferiority complex of rural folk. Not as to intrinsic worth, but as to the value of their social standards of living and their social institutions.

6. The rural community is more vitally and definitely a community than a city community. There are common interests and common problems. The country church is still a potent socializing force, and so has a more direct social obligation than the city church.

7. Real pastoral work, in the homes of the people, is still the normal method of contact between pastor and people. This is a great advantage for the rural minister.

8. The rural church is a recruiting ground for the city church, and must constantly give of its very best. This hurts, but it can't be helped.

9. Denominational differences are more pronounced among country people, and denominational coöperation is more difficult to secure.

Secondly come those differences that are due to temporary conditions in country life and the country church.

1. The circuit system of organization. Less than one-fourth of our country churches have a full-time minister, and most of these are located in the larger villages and towns.

2. Absentee pastoral treatment—a corollary of the above condition. Studies have revealed that churches of this kind in the country are less active, less aggressive, and more prone to lose membership and influence than churches served by a resident minister.

3. Small congregations and organization groups. This inevitably has an effect on the standing of the church in the community, and often on the minister himself, and throws a proportionately greater responsibility for financial support on the individual members.

4. The depopulation of the countryside—a movement that must continue until there is some adjustment between the rural and urban groups that will make some

stability possible. This may never actually come about, but meanwhile country churches must keep at the uphill task of training people only to lose them.

5. Inadequate church plant and equipment, and lack of sufficient suitable leadership material.

6. Overchurching at its worst. This is particularly true in the smaller towns and in the villages.

7. Low salary and large expense account of the rural minister. The harder he works, the more his automobile upkeep mounts. It probably costs the average country minister from five hundred dollars to seven hundred dollars a year to maintain this absolutely necessary working tool. Living costs in the country are now about the same as in the towns, and in some instances greater. Salaries have not kept pace with the change in these conditions.

8. Psychological attitude toward the country ministry. Some of us have got to stay in the country long enough and do a job worthwhile enough to make church officials and city ministers realize the difficulty and opportunity of the country parish. We will win respect for the country ministry not by clamoring for recognition, but by doing such good work that men must take heed.

THE MAN AND HIS JOB

Now this analysis of the conditions facing the country church sets forth the environment into which the country minister has to be adjusted, and for which he should be trained. And it also shows us, when we consider how many of these circumstances can be altered or helped by wise leadership, how full of opportunity his task is.

Put concisely, his job is not only to preach, teach and live spiritual realities, and to help supply the means for making spiritual power available—for this city and country church alike strive—but also he has the responsibility for practically applying these values in a social order in which his church has an opportunity to stand out as a great social force. We have certain difficulties that our city brethren do not have to face, but we also have a unique opportunity for community leadership and intimate pastoral work, which the pounders of the city pavements may well envy us. It is a distinct job; a great opportunity; a difficult task, but one where the reward is that we may enter into still larger opportunities.

What now of the minister that will be worthy of this high calling? It presents a distinct vocation. It is a specialist's job. One of the charts prepared by Professor C. H. Hamilton in the recent survey of the country church in Virginia presents graphically the ages of the country ministers. There is a high point between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age, a sharp decline from thirty-five to fifty, the period of a man's greatest efficiency of active service, and then after fifty another peak. What we have to do is to level those peaks and raise the valley. Young men and old men cannot meet the needs of the country church. We need men that will stay at the task all along the time of their active service. It is a calling that demands special devotion and special preparation, not special age qualifications of youth and advanced maturity. What kind of a minister do we need? How should he be trained?

First, as to the man himself. He needs first of all and in good measure that complete consecration to his task without which one is unworthy of his calling in city or country. He will need a certain buoyancy of spirit which will carry him through all sorts of discouragements and never permit him to take counsel of his disappointments.

He must have a certain pride in himself and in his calling as a country minister, that will keep him tuned up in mind and spirit to his task, up-to-date in his reading, abreast of the best of church literature generally, and especially in his chosen field of country work. He should have a recognition of the rural ministry as a life's work, a special vocation, a field which offers unlimited opportunities for local and more general leadership. He must love people, and love to deal with them first-hand, without the intervention of committees and machinery. He must be willing to do the small things over and over again, and realize that in the humbler tasks that fall to his hands lie the opportunities for his exaltation. He must be willing to preach to small congregations Sunday after Sunday, seeing the possibilities in single souls rather than in big groups. His interests must be developed along many, many lines. He can't just do that part of the job that especially appeals to him, as preaching, or pastoral work, or administration. He has to do it all. He must be community-minded, for the community looks to him for leadership. He must be a trained social worker, for the chances are there will be no professional social worker to whom he might turn. He must learn to love the country, and country ways. He must make friends with all kinds of weather, and keep at his task, hot or cold, wet or dry, winter or summer. He must be reliable to the last degree, so there will never be any question whether the church services will be held in the event of inclement weather. He must constantly study his job, find better ways of doing old things, and then sometimes be willing to keep on with the old methods lest the leader get too far ahead of the followers. He has to be tolerant of many of the petty things of life, but big enough to overlook much that is unworthy. He should be able to focus his attention and enthusiasm on the baby's newest tooth or the village's latest joke. He has to be something of an expert with gasoline engines, unless he wants the family to do without water at times, or desires to walk home when the car goes dead when far away at night. As a matter of fact, one can scarcely think of a commendable quality that isn't an absolute essential for the country minister. We need no second-rate men there, but the best that nature can offer and the least spoiled that the seminaries can spare.

KIND OF TRAINING NEEDED

So much for the man himself. What now of his training?

It is my judgment that most of a man's special training for the rural ministry should be postgraduate training. Not all of it, but most of it. The reasons are as follows:

1. He needs the fullest possible training to enrich his mind and spirit. The calls on him are many—for all sorts of addresses and sermons, and the time for study and reading is just as hard for him to secure as for the city minister. In either case it will be a matter of self-discipline. But he should begin his ministry with his mind stored with a richness of the world's literature, with an understanding of the scientific attitude toward things, for he is dealing with a clientele that will have in it more and more people scientifically trained. This basic training of college and seminary ought not to be sacrificed to a too early specialization.

2. After a little while in the rural ministry, he will feel the need for association with his brethren in an

atmosphere in which they can discuss their common problems and be instructed in the best and latest knowledge pertaining to rural life.

3. Rural conditions are changing so rapidly that what one might learn in seminary days would soon be out of date. The rural problems are vital, living ones, that especially in this day are ever varying. If he wants to keep up-to-date his knowledge must constantly be renewed.

4. Postgraduate work in rural subjects, in such rural summer schools as many institutions now maintain, gives an opportunity for the rural minister to meet those of other denominations engaged in the same work. This engenders a spirit of sympathy and understanding which local contacts may not provide.

5. A very few years in the country will make the minister recognize how much he needs special training. The recent graduate is full of ideas which he must try out a time or two. After this he is better prepared to take seriously the help that he can gather from others of longer experience in the rural field than himself.

These schools for special training in rural work are no new thing. Dr. Warren H. Wilson and other trail-blazers have been fostering them for years. But their number is increasing. Sometimes they are conducted at state universities, as at Wisconsin, or Cornell. Sometimes by an institution like Vanderbilt University or Washington College in Maryland; sometimes, and it seems to me less fortunately, they are purely denominational. In any event, the opportunity for further training is available if the man in the field is awake to his need for it.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY CURRICULUM

But there should be in every seminary a course or courses dealing with the opportunities and special characteristics of the rural field. There are at least two reasons:

1. This cause has to be presented to students as a great missionary opportunity. If we wait until every other missionary field in the world has presented its cause and obtained its pick of the men, we will never get the caliber of manhood that is needed for the rural work.

2. The urban and rural church work really form one unit, in fact as well as in organization, and it will help to break down that rural-urban conflict that unfortunately exists to such an extent to-day if the "seminarians" who are to go into city work have some understanding of the splendid worthwhileness of the task to which their rural brethren are devoting their lives.

DIGNIFYING THE COUNTRY PASTORATE

There remains one other point to be made. Effective country ministries depend on getting the right kind of men in the field and keeping them there. When we secure the best and train them as effectively as possible, the problem is not entirely solved. They won't stay put. Depending upon the different forms of church government, either the powers that be decide that the successful man in the country charge must work in a larger place, or the man himself feels the urge to betake himself to a field of greater usefulness.

In the former case, where one has to do with superior church officials, it isn't easy to convince them that the country work really needs the best men. In the latter case, where the men themselves have a hand in deciding where they shall work, it is sometimes difficult to impress upon them what they are missing when they pass on to the city. But there are some factors in the situation that can be changed that will tend to stabilize the situation and secure for the country work a fair proportion of the best men:

First: Salaries can be so equalized that the country ministers will find it possible to stay in the country and still give their families an education and a fair portion of the better things of life. This is a task for the church officials—for every one who really loves the country church, to see to it that the man in the country gets a living. Remember what his automobile costs. Remember how his other expenses have mounted—just as fast as his city brother's!

Secondly: All, and especially the country ministers themselves, can lend a hand in giving that dignity to the work that rightfully belongs to it. We country parsons must learn to hold our heads up in any gathering. It is no disgrace to be sunburned. We must take a pride in our job and in doing it well. We must, to paraphrase one of Virgil's lines, let our confidence be the warrant of our success. We are not inferior, nor are our people nor our opportunities inferior. Those who would say so speak ignorantly.

My emphasis is a call for the best men for this most important task, a distinct work worthy to engage a man for life. The best training for these men is needed. Justice demands recognition by the church as a whole that these people of the countryside where half of our population dwell, the country people of America, such folks as those among whom our Lord spent so much of his ministry, should have the best the church has to offer. It has been too long denied them, they should have the best.

PART VI

DOCTOR

CHAPTER XIII

MEDICAL CARE FOR COUNTRY PEOPLE

W. S. Rankin, M. D.

The Interest of the Country Church in the Ministry of Healing

The country churches share with all Christian churches in general, both Catholic and Protestant, the obligation placed upon them by their Founder; to heal the sick. There are, however, certain additional and special reasons why the rural and semi-rural churches should take more seriously to heart than churches in general the healing ministry of Jesus. These additional and special reasons are: First, ministers are influenced in their willingness to accept and retain rural or semi-rural pastorates by the availability of competent medical services. Second, the vitality—physical, mental and spiritual—of the rural church is dependent, to a much greater extent than is generally recognized, upon an available and competent medical service. Third, the serious defect in the medical service of the United States, as will later fully appear, is a rural and semi-rural and not an urban condition.

For the interest of the church in the ministry of healing to be taken as seriously as its obligation is profound, and for that interest to become intelligently active, a clear understanding is necessary as to (1) the essential place of the hospital in the modern treatment of disease, and (2) the opportunity and obligation of the church for improving hospital provisions.

THE PLACE OF THE HOSPITAL IN THE MODERN TREATMENT OF DISEASE

To appreciate the place of the hospital in modern medical care, one must understand (1) the relation of the hospital to modern medicine, (2) the adequacy of hospital provisions, (3) the distribution of hospital provisions, and (4) the effect of the distribution of hospital facilities on the larger and more important problem of medical services.

THE RELATION OF THE HOSPITAL TO MODERN MEDICINE

During the last three decades of the last century, the work of three men laid the foundations for modern medicine and revolutionized the practice of the healing art. Pasteur, Koch, and Lister—Frenchman, German and Englishman, a triad significant of the international character of science—engaged in research and brought forth discoveries which resulted in antiseptic surgery and the diagnostic laboratory. In 1895 Roentgen came along with the X-Ray. The practice of antiseptic surgery required conditions and equipment which could not be supplied in the average home, but could be provided in a specially prepared place to serve the common interests of the community. The use of the diagnostic laboratory required equipment too expensive to be provided and too highly technical in its manipulation to be used in the average doctor's office, but which could be provided and satisfactorily used in some central place to serve the common interests of the local profession and the community. The use of the expensive X-Ray equipment, requiring, as it does, special technical training, was a third factor in making necessary the assemblage in a specially prepared place of expensive equipment essential to the practice of modern medicine. This assemblage of technical apparatus and skill for the practice of medicine, this pooling of the resources of medicine in a central place in the community, is responsible for the birth and development of hospitalization in the treatment of disease.

Before hospitalization, medical services consisted of one thing, medical personnel—physicians; since hospitalization, medical services consist of three intimately related, reciprocally active, inseparable parts, medical personnel, plus hospital facilities, plus professional nurses. In consonance with this last statement, it is interesting to note that when the first census of hospitals was taken in 1873 there were only 149 hospitals in the United States; in 1900 there were approximately 2000 hospitals, and in 1928 there were 7500; and, to emphasize the relation between the development of hospitals and professional nursing, it may be noted that when the first census of training schools and professional nurses was taken in 1879 there were 11 training schools, 141 nurses graduating during that year, and 298 nurses in training. Now there are more than 2000 training schools, approximately 18,000 graduate nurses during the year, and 60,000 nurses in training. Thus it will be noted that the hospital, in supplying two of the three factors, namely, expensive technical equipment and skilled assistants, that is, nurses and technicians, now necessary in an efficient medical service, has completely changed the method of practicing medicine and has distinguished modern medicine from the antiquated practices of the past.

ADEQUACY OF HOSPITAL PROVISIONS

General hospital provisions, special hospitals excluded, are considered as adequate for urban centers, cities of populations of 50,000 or more, when there are as many as five beds per thousand population. Five beds per thousand urban population is necessary under present conditions, because the urban centers are called upon to provide hospital beds not only for their own sick, but also for the seriously ill of the large rural areas that lie within the sphere of the commercial and professional influence of the larger centers. If the outlying smaller neighboring cities and towns were provided with a reasonable proportion of hospital beds to population, then, the larger centers of population might be served adequately by four beds per thousand population. For the outlying smaller cities, towns and rural areas, two beds per thousand population would probably suffice. If it is assumed that the above estimates, four beds per thousand population for cities of 50,000 population and over and two beds per thousand population for all other cities, towns and rural areas, are reasonably correct, then, the general hospital provisions needed for the country would be: for approximately 180 cities with populations of 50,000 and over, with a total population in 1927 of 40,000,000, 200,000 general hospital beds; for 80,000,000 people living outside of these urban centers in the smaller cities, towns and rural areas, 160,000 general hospital beds—a total of 200,000 plus 160,000 or 360,000 general hospital beds. To meet this estimated need, we had, in 1927, according to the American Medical Association, 345,364 general hospital beds, or 95 per cent of the estimated need.

Hospital authorities have another basis of arriving at estimates of hospital adequacy. When more than 75 per cent of the hospital beds for a given population are occupied at the average time, it is assumed that there is a deficiency of hospital beds; when less than 76 per cent are occupied at the average time, it is assumed that there is a surplus of hospital beds. Of the 345,364 general hospital beds in 1927, only 66 per cent were occupied at the average time.

From the foregoing considerations, it would seem that the ratio of hospital beds to population, hospital adequacy, falls not far short of reasonable requirements.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOSPITAL PROVISIONS

A country may have the highest per capita wealth and, at the same time, most deplorable economic conditions on account of all the wealth being concentrated in the hands of but a small percentage of its people; likewise, a country may have an exceptionally high ratio of hospital beds to population, and, at the same time, a seriously crippled medical service on account of its hospital facilities being concentrated within certain population groups and so unevenly distributed as to cause a pronounced dislocation of its medical personnel. With this warning preface, let us now examine the facts of the situation with reference to the distribution of hospitals.

The distribution of hospitals as between urban and rural populations is indicated by the distribution of hospitals as between cities and towns of varying populations. Cities of 100,000 population and over have an average of 22 hospitals; cities of 50,000 to 100,000 population have an average of 6 hospitals; cities of from 25,000 to 50,000 population have an average of 4 hospitals; cities of from 10,000 to 25,000 population have an average of 2 hospitals; cities and towns of 10,000 population and less have an average of ¼ of a hospital. Note that there are approximately one hundred times as many hospitals in the average large city as in the average small city or town. This uneven distribution of hospital provision, as between urban and rural populations, is still greater when measured not in the number of hospitals but in the number of hospital beds. The larger cities average approximately 3800 beds; the smaller cities of populations of 10,000 and less, 25 beds. There are, therefore, 150 times as many hospital beds in proportion to population in the average large city as in the average small city or town. Alongside of these statistics on the distribution of hospital facilities, permit me one more statistical statement, namely, that *in* and *about* places of 10,000 population and under, and dependent upon these places for 90 to 95 per cent of their medical services, is just a little more than one-half of the population of the United States.

THE EFFECT OF THE PRESENT DISTRIBUTION OF HOSPITAL PROVISION

Every medical school, every medical textbook, every medical journal, every medical program, every recognized leader of the profession teaches, day in and day out, directly and indirectly, that the practice of modern medicine is dependent upon the availability of hospital facilities. This teaching is effective with the more recent and older graduates of medicine in proportion to their intelligence and idealism, in proportion to their spirit of progress. The effect of this influence is to create a desire on the part of the majority of the doctors, and a desire almost irresistible in the more ambitious and progressive members of the profession, to locate where hospital facilities are available. Because hospital facilities are to be found in the larger centers of population and are not to be found in smaller cities, towns and rural areas, we have a dislocation, quantitative and qualitative, of medical personnel from the smaller to the larger centers of population. Herein lies the essential explanation of there being one physician to 536 people in the larger centers of population and one physician to 1238 people in the smaller centers. The serious significance of this condition lies not so much in the numerical disparity as in the difference in type of physicians who are drawn to places affording hospital facilities. Moreover, this dislocation of the whole content of medical services, hospitals, nurses and physicians, is doubly pathological from the sociological point of view: too many doctors in some places; too few in others.

THE RATIONALE OF TREATMENT

For social pathology, as for individual diseases, the principles of modern treatment call for remedies that directly counteract causes. To prevent consequences, treat causes. The essential cause, in addition to the contributary causes of the present dislocation of medical service, is the absence of a proper distribution of hospital facilities. The treatment for existing weaknesses in our medical service is, then, self-evident: a more even distribution of hospital facilities. This can be accomplished in but one way, and that by assisting in the construction of small hospitals of from thirty to fifty beds in the smaller centers of population, the towns of from three thousand to eight thousand people that serve as trading, professional and political centers of rural population groups of from twenty to fifty thousand people.

The Duke Endowment is, at the present time, appropriating more than a million dollars a year in bringing about a more even distribution of hospital facilities in the

Carolinas. If, in this way, (1) the practice of physicians already on the ground may be improved, (2) men who have kept abreast of the advances of modern medicine may be retained in rural practices, and (3) recent graduates attracted, an improved medical service that will care for not only the more seriously ill, the institutional sick, but all of the sick, institutional, domestic, and ambulatory, of the whole country, will be effected. This, then, is our aim: not simply an institution, but a service, a modern country-wide medical service.

THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE OBLIGATION OF THE CHURCH

In accepting its obligation and in meeting its opportunity to heal the sick, it is assumed that the Protestant churches are more interested in the whole problem of medical service, including medical schools, physicians, nurses, and hospitals, in their intimate reciprocal relations, than in any detached fraction of that problem; and that the leadership of these churches clearly differentiates between means and ends, and, in so doing, sees the hospital problem in its relation to the general problem of medicine; in brief, sees the hospital not as an end in itself but as a means to an end, a greatly improved medical service for a country of 120,000,000 people.

This integral conception of the problem of medical service is rarely apparent in the work of the rank and file of denominations. When this rank and file see in the hospital a means and not an end; when this rank and file, like the Scribes and Pharisees of old, cease to ask for a sign, a visible form of expression, and distinguish between a sign and a service; when this rank and file learn that the Christian axiom: "Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them," is as applicable to collective conduct as to individual conduct, and when, in consonance with that Christian doctrine, they cease to build large denominational hospitals with the words "Baptist," "Methodist," "Presbyterian," "Episcopal," etc., chiseled in large letters across their entrances to be seen of men; when they cease to build these large denominational hospitals in the only places where such hospitals can be built, in large cities, where, comparatively speaking, there is already a good ratio of hospital beds to population and where not infrequently hospital bed occupancy is below the normal seventy-five per cent; when, on the other hand, they catch the true spirit of that hard saying: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it," and again apply a rule for the individual life to the collective life, when the Protestant churches can submerge their denominational identity and come together in the true spirit of Christian service in small union Protestant hospitals, the only type of church hospitals possible, where hospitals are most needed, that is, in the smaller rural settlements; when our church leaders remember that the suffering man, passed by the two representatives of the ancient church, priest and Levite, was not on the streets of Jerusalem or Jericho, but out in the country on the highway, and note that now, as in ancient times, the neglected man is still in the country, then shall we see more clearly the inspired picture; "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

CHAPTER XIV

THE BIBLICAL PROGRAM OF HEALING

JESSE C. ROWAN

THE church, both rural and urban, is an institution which has been inspired and prompted of the Holy Bible, and for that reason, I am going to base what I shall say upon that book. You will be good enough, then, I am confident, to pardon the fact that my paper is sermonic in nature and character.

If I were selecting a text—and that is what I am really doing—I would select the twenty-third verse of the fourth chapter of "The Gospel According to St. Matthew." The words are these: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." These words were written concerning Jesus, who was the Builder and the Maker of the Christian church, and reveal to a remarkable degree Jesus' Galilean program, which was indeed the program of His whole public career.

I want to ask you to do just three things. Look, in the first place, at the program of Jesus. Compare, in the second place, the program of Jesus with the program of the church. Consider, in the third and last place, a remedial suggestion.

THE PROGRAM OF JESUS

The program of Jesus, in the first place, was a program of teaching. And what, let us ask, did Jesus teach?

Jesus taught among other things that there is something more important than hearing the Word of God. You don't believe that? Jesus did not teach that hearing the Word of God is not important; in fact, He taught just the opposite. He did teach, however, that there is something more important than hearing the Word of God. I quote from the Bible!

> Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them *not*, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

Jesus taught, then, that *doing* the Word of God is more important than *hearing* the Word of God.

Again, Jesus taught that there is something more important than public worship. Jesus did not teach, let us mark, that public worship is not important; in fact, He taught just the opposite. He did teach, however, that there is something more important than public worship. I quote again from the Holy Bible: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother had aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Jesus taught, then, that being on *just* and *right* terms with the brethren is more important than public worship.

Again, Jesus taught among other things, that there is something more important than mere institutions or organizations. Jesus did not teach that institutions or organizations are not important; in fact, He taught just the opposite. He did teach, however, that there is something more important than institutions or organizations. I quote again from the Holy Bible:

> Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.

Jesus taught, then, that *service* to *humanity* is more important than mere institutions or organizations.

The program of Jesus, in the second place, was a program of preaching. And what, let us ask, did Jesus preach?

Jesus preached among other things the immediateness of the Kingdom of Heaven. I quote again from the Holy Bible: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: For the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus preached, then, that the Kingdom of Heaven is not a far off and distant hope and dream, but a present and blessed reality.

Again, Jesus preached among other things, the gospel or good news of the Kingdom. I quote again from the Holy Bible: "And Jesus went about all Galilee . . . preaching the gospel of the Kingdom." The word "gospel" means "good news"; and news has reference to that which has already taken place and not to that which may happen in the future. Jesus preached, then, the gospel or good news of the Kingdom; and He had good news to preach, as we shall see in an unusual light, as we consider our next caption, or heading.

The program of Jesus, in the third place, was a program of healing. Whom, let us ask, did Jesus heal?

Jesus healed all that came to Him to be healed. I quote again from the Holy Bible: "And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all." There is no record in the New Testament of a person who ever came to Jesus to be healed, and went away not healed on account of a lack of faith. There is a record in the New Testament of one who was not healed by Jesus' disciples on account of a lack of faith; but that lack of faith was a lack of faith on the part of Jesus' disciples, and not a lack of faith on the part of the sufferer. I have said this not because I want to strike at those who teach that healing can be effected through belief and petition alone, but to affirm that I shall not use the word "healing" in that sense when I use it.

THE PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH

Let us, in the second place, compare the program of Jesus and the program of the church. Has the church a teaching program? The teaching program of the church is duplicated and multiplied. Has the church a preaching program. The preaching program of the church is duplicated and multiplied. Has the church a healing program? It certainly has not to any wide, comprehensive, and publicly recognized degree. In fact, a great many individual churches, not only in the country but also in the cities and towns, have no healing program at all. How many individual churches, either rural or urban, let me ask, exercise a healing ministry?

A REMEDIAL SUGGESTION

The church has a remedy. Before looking at this, however, I want to speak a few words concerning a certain unscriptural and unchristian position which is held by some professed Christians.

Some maintain that a ministry of healing is not a cardinal part of the mission of the church of Jesus Christ. Is it true that a ministry of healing is not a cardinal part of the mission of the church of Jesus Christ? If you will turn to the twenty-eighth chapter of "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" and read the Great Commission, you will find these words: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Teaching them what? "Teaching *them* to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded *you*." And what did He command His disciples? If you will turn to the tenth chapter of "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," you will find a part of the answer in the following words: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying . . . Heal the sick."

Now, the only remedial suggestion that I want to offer is embraced in a way in my next sentence. The church ought to put thought, and effort, and time, and money into a healing program, just as she puts thought, and effort, and time, and money into her preaching program and her teaching program; and the thought, and effort, and time, and money which she puts into a healing program ought to be just as adequate as the thought, and effort, and time, and money which she puts into her preaching program and her teaching program.

Adequate scientific medical treatment is so expensive to-day—and this is especially true of hospitalization—that the average person, in either city and town or in the country, cannot afford it. The church, it seems to me, should avail herself of the splendid opportunity of coöperation with physicians and all other interested individuals, organizations, and endowments, remembering that her blessed Lord gave His very life for humanity. In some places, the church might build or help build hospitals. In other places the church might endow rooms in hospitals that have already been built, or bear the expense of a certain number of charity patients, or pay for a certain number of charity days. In all places the church should organize to minister unto the indigent sick, and fulfill that part of her mission which has been too much neglected through the passing centuries.

CHAPTER XV

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING IN THE COUNTRY

Henry W. McLaughlin

"Those people are twenty miles from a doctor of any kind! The nearest one to them is a drunkard. If they send to the nearest town for a physician the fee is from $20.00 to $30.00, according to mileage." The above information was imparted by a man who for sixteen years has dedicated his life to the country people in a very beautiful section of rural America. In a day's drive through his parish we had reached the summit of a mountain and were looking down over a valley all dotted over with farm houses. "Is there a living for a doctor if one should locate in this country?" I asked. "Yes, a good living for a man in whom the people would have confidence, and if he were a Christian he could help furnish the moral leadership so sorely needed." Conditions in the above county are representative, to a lesser or greater degree, of those in thousands of other rural communities, especially in the South and West.

The situation is growing more alarming all the time. The rich who can afford to pay and the poor who can't pay are not so much neglected. The greatest problem is with the good, honest middle class of country people who are self-respecting and want to pay their bills, and whose income is so small that they cannot afford the present high cost of medical attention in rural areas.

A recent editorial in a Nashville, Tenn., daily paper closes as follows: "The ranks of the rural physician have been badly depleted in recent years. There does not seem to be any immediate prospect of securing recruits for general practitioners in the rural districts." The following is culled from a report of Dr. Pusey, ex-President of the American Medical Association; Studies have been made in 940 towns of forty-seven states, revealing that all had physicians in 1914 but only 650 had any in 1925. Thus, one-third of those smaller places lost their physicians within eleven years. Dr. Pusey's studies also reveal that only one and two-fifths per cent of the doctors who graduated during the last ten years have gone into rural sections of the United States. The average age at death of American physicians is now sixty-two years, the highest it has ever been. The average age of country doctors in 1925 was fifty-two. An average age of fifty-two years and an average age at death of sixty-two years means that if the present situation is not remedied there will be a breakdown of the rural service in 1935. The high cost of medical education is given as one of the principle reasons for the present situation.

A SOLUTION

Something ought to be done. Who can suggest a remedy? Much has been written about the problem of medical service in rural areas. Little has been done toward solving it.

Two groups of society are concerned: the doctors and the country people. Any satisfactory solution must consider both of these groups.

(a) The profession must not be cheapened by lowered standards.

(b) Initiative and motives to excel on the part of physicians must not be impaired.

(c) Subsidies and short cuts should have no place in the scheme. There may be a growing tendency toward commercialism in the medical profession, but we must not forget that the laborer is worthy of his hire. It should be remembered that the doctor must live and support his family. Any plan which would do an injustice to this group of society should not be tolerated. The plan set forth in this chapter contemplates not more doctors but those of a better type, not a greater number of doctors but a more equitable distribution.

The matter of chief concern is the welfare of the people to be served. We are frank to say that we are looking at this question from the point of view of our farm population which is so underprivileged in medical care. We look at the matter from the point of view of the farmer and not the doctor; yet there is no reason why a remedy should not be provided for the farmer which at the same time would prove an advantage to the doctor. It is not necessary to take time and space to prove what every thoughtful citizen who knows the facts, recognizes—that the situation in rural areas is deplorable. There are still some of the fine type of the old-time country doctors left, God bless them, but age is creeping on. The ranks are thinning. There are few young physicians serving the country people, prompted by altruistic purposes. Many of the doctors now practicing in the rural areas are there because they are not able to make a living in the city. Many of them are unfits, misfits or counterfeits! Some are dope fiends, others drinkers, some are morally, socially and intellectually incapable of surviving in the keener competition of the urban areas. These men are not only a menace to the good of the people in the country but they are often propagandists against hospitals and the public health service of the state. The rural hospitals and public health service can never rightly perform their functions until there are located in the rural areas doctors of a higher type and more altruistic purpose.

Much has been written of the vanishing country doctor of the old type. No workable plan has been suggested to provide for his substitute in affording medical care for the farm people. In the meantime the farmers continue to be underprivileged in medical care, though the cost of such care has increased to such an extent that millions of the people have resorted to patent medicines or home remedies. Millions of them have no medical care at all, except in very extreme illness. The problem is so difficult and is one of such grave concern, that the *church,* the *school* and the *state* should all join forces in the solution. It is a question which should challenge the best thought and the most careful consideration of all three agencies.

1. *The Church.* By the church, we mean all the branches, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant, including all the denominations.

What definite service can the church render in this plan?

(1) It can secure volunteers for medical service. The church is in a better position to inspire youth with purposes of altruistic service than any other agency. Youth is blessed with a glowing vision. It revels in adventure. It glories in a crusade for a righteous cause. It should be a task of the church to challenge youth with the facts concerning the opportunities for service in the ministry of healing among the underprivileged in the country.

(2) The church may keep in touch with the accepted students during their course of medical education in order to help maintain their altruistic purposes. The band of volunteers in each medical college should be visited and advised. If possible, each student should be led to read two or more country-minded books each year, calculated to keep before him the vision of altruistic service.

(3) The church, through the various religious journals and other mediums, may apprise the country communities of the names and addresses of the graduates who are volunteers for medical service in rural areas, and in other ways can help to locate these men where they will have a practice that will provide them a living and opportunities for large service to the public good. The country communities should be encouraged to select their physicians as they do their teachers and clergymen. Some of the communities may be induced to build a home for their physician and pledge their moral and economic support. The minister, the teacher and the doctor should form the nucleus for the cultural, social, moral and spiritual leadership of the rural communities in which they are located. A sufficient number of such rural communities will do more to solve our national problems than anything else. These communities constitute the sources of a sane and competent leadership. The destiny of the multitudes is in the hands of their leaders. The supreme need of the hour is to have a sufficient number of the right kind of rural communities in which to produce the pathfinders of the race. Such communities will serve as do nurseries to fruitful orchards, as seed plots to productive fields, as springs to mighty rivers.

2. *The School.* The medical college should provide annually a one-thousand-dollar scholarship for a period

of four years for the medical student who will pledge himself for a period of ten years in rural communities. These men should be chosen on the grounds of altruistic purposes, scholastic attainments and gifts of leadership.

For the amount of money received, the student should be required to execute bankable notes, bearing interest from date. These notes should become collectable, with interest, at any time the student changes his plans with reference to giving himself in service to some rural community.

These notes, with interest, should be canceled upon expiration of ten years as a practicing physician in a rural area.

"Rural" here means a village of less than twenty-five hundred and the surrounding country.

Each student should also be required to insure his life for the benefit of the medical college for a sum equal to the amount of money received in scholarships, but after one year's service as a practicing physician in a rural community the insurance policy may become the property of the student.

In order that there be a sufficient number of students with like minds and purposes in an institution to maintain an *esprit de corps* for medical service in rural areas, it is desirable that the medical college should commence with at least five scholarships with a view of adding five each year, if funds are available, until there are twenty men in the institution preparing for this form of service.

This plan will secure a better type of medical student. The present high cost of medical education has excluded many of the more worthy young men. Sons of ministers, farmers, widows and others cannot afford the price. The increasing cost of medical education has a tendency to narrow the selection to sons of rich men, which means deterioration in the profession. The plan we suggest will put a premium on the aristocracy of brains and character, rather than on dollars.

There are many qualities that are essential to a desirable candidate for the medical profession, other than that of being the son of a rich father. The scheme will attract to our medical colleges students who have tried their wings in adventure, rather than those who have remained sheltered in the nest. The medical profession needs to be enriched by men who have lived dangerously, profiting in the experience of the pioneer rather than those who have drifted into it simply because they were able to pay the cost. This plan will give men an opportunity to become doctors who have been prepared for the arena by the cudgel of hard knocks, rather than those who have been coddled by wealthy and indulgent parents.

It will secure prompt payment of fees and a more satisfactory type of work on the part of the students. It will also accrue to the benefit of the medical colleges, because these men of high order will go to sections in the states where they will be able to stimulate a better attitude toward the medical colleges. Legislators from some rural counties are not friendly toward appropriations to our medical schools.

It has been suggested that these graduates, who are volunteers for rural communities, be made practicing fellows with the privilege of returning at pleasure to the medical school for the purpose of keeping abreast with their profession. On condition that this is done, they should be maintained as members of the nearest hospital staff with certain rights and privileges for their patients. This would set these volunteers apart from ordinary country doctors, and would preserve for them their professional standing. Many young physicians are deterred from practicing medicine in the country, because they feel that it marks them as inferior. Their sweethearts, their wives, their "in-laws" and the rest of their kith and kin assume that a doctor who practices medicine in the country is second rate.

This plan also will greatly facilitate and enlarge the services of rural hospitalization. It has been stated that if we establish good hospitals in the rural areas they will attract the right kind of physicians. This is true. But how are you going to establish and maintain hospitals in these areas where they are so sorely needed, as is shown from the investigations of Dr. W. S. Rankin, Director Hospital and Orphan Sections, Duke Endowment, and others? They cannot be established nor maintained without an aroused public opinion and enlightened capable leadership. Rural hospitals constitute the ultimate solution of the problem of medical service among the country people, but they are a very costly enterprise and it will require many years and the outlay of vast sums of money before the need will be adequately met. To my mind the logical sequence is to first locate the right kind of a doctor in the country, who should then become the principle leader in educating, stimulating and arousing the public sentiment of the community to provide and support the local hospital. The solution of every social problem is found in personality. Every institution is the product of personality dedicated to the task.

Thee, O my soul forget it not,
  Earth has no consecrated spot,
Except where filtering through decay
  Life wrought its work in agony.

'Tis thus earth's noblest temples rise,
Their pillars laid in sacrifice,
And nobler grows the gain of man
Each time he dies to rise again.

It is cheaper to discover and train personality than it is to build institutions. Institutions are the logical consequence of the personality of men who have a sufficient amount of idealism to become the leaders of the people.

3. *The State.* The question has possibly suggested itself: Where will the medical schools secure the funds with which to provide the one-thousand-dollar scholarships? These scholarships should be similar to those that are given to the cadets at West Point and Annapolis. If the Federal Government can appropriate money to educate youth to kill men, it certainly can appropriate money to educate them to cure men. The protection of the health of the people of the nation is our best preparation for national defense.

This should in part become the business of the state. The Federal Government should appropriate the price of a two-cent postage stamp for every member of the farm population to help provide this fund. This would be the small sum of only $600,000 a year, but it is enough for a demonstration. This money should be distributed on the basis of $1000 for each 50,000 or fraction thereof, of the farm population in each state. It should be administered by the State Board of Education for the purpose of vocational training. The money should be distributed by the State Board of Education to the medical schools, giving those in the state the preference. If a state has no medical school within its bounds, the money may be designated to medical schools in other states. In each case, medical schools receiving money for these scholarships should be required to meet the Federal appropriation by an equal amount. The medical schools should be able to secure these funds either from private subscription, foundation societies, or appropriations by state legislatures.

This plan would guarantee in rural communities doctors of character who could help meet the urgent need of intelligent, trustworthy, rural leadership. It would prove a practical form of farm relief. It would give to the farmer better medical service at less cost. The farmers have been so underprivileged in economics that they are not able to provide for the medical education of their sons. This would secure means by which the farmers' sons could get the technical training.

This plan does not provide for a subsidy, but it does provide for a sum of $4000 to be given the student during the period when it is necessary, if he is to get a medical education. At the end of ten years, with accumulated interest, it will amount to $8404. The country doctor, under this plan, can afford to serve the farmers each year at $840.40 less than if he had borrowed the money and was forced to pay it back with interest.

There is at present a disposition to do something for the farmers. There is nothing that will contribute more to his economic and social betterment than to secure for him competent physicians to furnish community leadership and adequate medical service for himself and his family at a reasonable cost. A vast deal of money is spent for education on a "hit and miss" plan.

The above plan does not force any man to be a country doctor. If he changes his mind, the scholarship becomes a loan to be returned, with interest. If he maintains his purpose it becomes a gift bestowed upon him when it is needed most. It is a gift based upon a return of service to the people who are the most underprivileged in medical care.

PART VII

RECREATION

CHAPTER XVI

THE RECREATIONAL LIFE OF COUNTRY YOUNG PEOPLE

C. A. MONTGOMERY

IN this discussion I shall speak particularly of the 4-H club, what it is doing in the field of recreation and the opportunity it offers Sunday-school teachers and ministers who live in the country to capitalize this movement for the church and the glory of God. In an editorial on 4-H club work in the July issue of "The Earnest Worker," Dr. Henry W. McLaughlin says: "The most remarkable youth movement of the century is that among our farm boys and girls. It is so recent that many people have not yet taken cognizance of it."

RECREATION DEFINED

Recreation includes work and play. Labor includes work and drudgery. Work is in both play and labor. A boy may work hard playing baseball and enjoy it. When he goes home and is asked to do chores about the house which require far less work it is drudgery, if he dislikes doing it.

Play is too often considered childish. Perhaps we should employ this broader term *recreation*

> which [says Dr. C. C. Taylor] uses both the enjoyment of amusement and the constructive development of play, but goes beyond both in that it

> consciously recreates something that has been torn down, or creates something new. . . . The first essential of recreation is relaxation, freedom from work, worry, monotony. . . . The second essential is that it actually be carried forward by some activity. . . . The third essential, that it reconstruct or create the desirable end that it purposes.
>
> The physical values of play are (1) it is a tonic; (2) it helps to develop the body systematically; (3) it quickens the senses; (4) it develops coördination, rhythm, grace.
>
> The mental values are alertness, initiative, quick decision, precision, courage and skill.
>
> The social values rank above the physical and mental. Play is almost universally a social project. It develops (1) community interest; (2) coöperative technique; (3) leadership: (4) community loyalty; and (5) the capacity to associate.
>
> The church uses play now, not merely to attract young people but because it recognizes that the best way to teach ethics and morality is to inculcate them into the habits and attitudes of people. Play helps to develop (1) self-control and determination; (2) recognition of rights of others, altruism, fairness; (3) enthusiasm, aspiration, zest, and joy, which are no small part of religion itself.

RURAL RECREATION SITUATION

Prejudices against recreation are gradually breaking down, but there are many who still hold that work is the supreme end of life and that play is just so much time wasted. Two days ago I was talking with a church officer, who is also a Sunday-school superintendent, a member of a country school board and one of the most influential men in his community. I told him I was to discuss recreation and asked him to give me some points. His reply was: "If you want to know what I think of the kind of recreation young people need, it is this: give them axes, and wood to chop and split!"

If we talk with leading sociologists of to-day, or read their books, we find that even they differ as to the type and value of recreation for rural youth.

Many young people and most adults in rural communities play the least and need it the most. Old time forms of community recreation such as husking bees, sleigh rides and hay rides, quilting and sewing parties, harvest festivals, barn raisings, etc., which grew out of the necessity for coöperative effort because of working conditions, were discontinued when we got the automobile, modern machinery and better communication. With the improvement in transportation, people gave up old forms of social gatherings, in which all participated, and began to go to towns and cities for amusement. The result is we spend much of our leisure time and money in being entertained. Rural recreation of a neighborhood type is in competition with commercial recreation agencies of the towns and cities. Country people get into the car, enjoy a few miles' ride, and go to the city. The pull of the commercial amusement is as strong for country youth as it is for the city youth. There is danger in both, but more danger for the country youth since he is out of his home environment. He or she is attracted by the brilliance of display or the appearance of wealth, and the quiet atmosphere of the farm loses whatever recreational appeal it had. Music and sensational excitement bring the movie, the dance hall and other amusements into the foreground of appeal.

The dominant motive of commercial amusements is profit. Little recognition is given to moral values. Too often that which is spiritually inspiring is declared to be unprofitable and is discontinued. Commercial amusements, so long as the profit motive controls, are little likely to work toward the building of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The biggest American industry to-day is commercialized amusement. We have become bleacherites. For instance, our gymnasiums in schools and other places are of little value on account of being used largely by a few to train for basketball to win over other teams. The crowds sit and look at games instead of using the floors for types of recreation in which all might participate.

The city is furnishing more and more recreational amusements for the country. Commercial amusements sap the initiative of people. They go, pay their money, and are entertained without further responsibility. They take what is sold to them, having no part in its creation.

In the forms of recreation undertaken in their community they usually have part and responsibility. If it is a grange or some other organization program, they are the actors. If it is a field day, they make the arrangements and are responsible for success or failure. They are a part of it and actively participate in it. On the other hand, the only link they have with the commercial amusement is the money they paid for their tickets.

Surveys show that 45 per cent of the time of high-school boys or girls is leisure time, and 36 per cent of the time of those who work is leisure, and that 50 per cent of their leisure time is spent doing nothing. One-fifth of the population in the United States attends commercial amusements for recreation daily and the majority of these are between 18 and 25 years old. Three-fourths of those in pool rooms are under 21 years of age. These surveys, of course, covered city and country, but these facts stress the importance of well-directed rural organization for rural youth.

At first glance the picture of rural recreation is a gloomy one, but there are many things that point to better days ahead. Surveys have been made in some states which show that when good roads first opened up isolated sections, the people flocked to cities but later began to develop amusement and recreation programs back in their communities. The fact that most of the junior character-building agencies have entered the rural field within the last decade or two and have made so large a beginning, is encouraging. The rapid increase of consolidated schools with definite recreational programs is steadily raising the level of rural education. The 4-H clubs and similar groups are all of recent growth. Within two years the Playground and Recreation Association of America has put two full-time men in the rural field and they are coöperating with the 4-H club leaders, and doing notable work. Normal schools, colleges and universities are including courses of study and training in play leadership.

THE 4-H CLUB MOVEMENT

Boys' and girls' 4-H club work is a part of the National Agricultural Extension System. Through it rural boys and girls from 10 to 20 years of age, in and out of school, are taught better agricultural and home economic practices and the finer and more significant things of rural life.

The 4-H club provides opportunity for practical, educational development through study and practice in agriculture, home economics, and related topics; learning by doing. It provides for social and recreational development and parliamentary practice through the community 4-H club organization. In short, 4-H club work stands for all-round development of country young people, through participation in economic and community activities which better fit them for their responsibilities as citizens, whether in the country as farmers and homemakers, or in other walks of life.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The first club work as a part of Agricultural Extension Work was the boys' corn club, organized by County Agent W. H. Smith in Holmes County, Mississippi, in 1907. During 1908 corn clubs were organized in a few counties in several states with an enrollment of about 2000. That year the late T. O. Sandy, of Burkeville, was appointed State Agent for Virginia. At the request of Dr. J. D. Eggleston, then State Superintendent of Public Instruction, boys' corn club work was started. Southall Farrar, now district agent in Southside, Virginia, was appointed county agent in Chesterfield and Dinwiddie Counties. That fall he enrolled 25 boys in Chesterfield and 50 in Dinwiddie in the corn club to raise an acre of corn under his supervision the following year, 1909. The 75 boys made an average of 65 bushels of corn per acre when the average for the counties was about 18 bushels

The first girls' canning club was organized in Aiken County, South Carolina, in the early part of 1910. The same year Miss Ella G. Agnew, now one of the editors of *The Southern Planter,* organized the first canning clubs in Virginia. In 1912 poultry and pig club projects were started. Other projects were added year after year until demonstrations are being conducted now in practically all phases of agriculture and home economics.

Four-H club work in Virginia has made a substantial growth each year since its beginning. The enrollment this year is over 17,000 boys and girls, who are organized in about 1000 community 4-H clubs. The work is supervised by the farm and home demonstration agents. The 4-H clubs now have a membership in the United States of more than 700,000 and are growing at the rate of about 100,000 a year. They are community, county, state and national organizations.

The rapid growth of the movement is due to its branching out into the avenues of endeavor which appeal to the psychic characteristics and inherent social traits of rural youth. From its beginning the activities added year after year have made powerful appeal to rural boys and girls. More attention is being given to recreation at present than ever before. This year Virginia secured the services of Dr. W. P. Jackson, of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, for five weeks. During this time recreational institutes were held in different sections of the state most accessible to county agents, volunteer local leaders and older club members. Miss Ella Gardner, Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., gave us four weeks. She held a number of institutes and taught recreation at some 4-H club short courses. A. H. Lichty, State Y. M. C. A. Secretary, furnished trained recreation leaders for camps and short courses where needed. The state employed a play director and song leader this summer to help with our 4-H program. With this expert help we are making progress in adding to the recreational life of the country young people.

4-H CLUB IDEALS

Like many junior organizations the 4-H club has ideals relating directly to character building, and unlike many it has an economic feature. Some of the ideals are expressed in its motto: "To Make the Best Better," meaning a spirit to excel in individual enterprise and group effort over former records; in its emblem: the development of mental, physical, social and spiritual natures along with skill in the application of them. The 4-H club emblem is a four-leaf clover with an H on each leaf, and the purpose of greater service to mankind, as expressed in the pledge which is based on the four H's: "I pledge my Head to clearer thinking, my Heart to greater loyalty, my Hands to larger service and my Health to better living, for my club, my community and my country." These ideals are worthy and have a high place in the organization, but because of their intangibility they alone lack strength of appeal. The 4-H club projects or economic side, ownership, earning and doing really worthwhile things in contributing to country life in a material way, has its appeal, stimulates interest and earnest effort. All of which is a means to an end—attaining higher ideals and acquiring a finer conception of life.

The 4-H club creates a demand for leaders and coöperative effort among young people through worthwhile enterprises. It provides a favorable condition in rural communities for stimulating sufficient interest among its members to convert the drudgery of work into pleasurable activities. It helps keep young people at home and engaged in wholesome employment during leisure time.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

Sunday-school teachers and ministers who live in the country have the opportunity to capitalize the 4-H club movement for the church. Local leaders are needed. It is very necessary if proper ideals are to be fostered, that leadership should be Christian. It is a challenge to country churches. According to a survey of the country churches in Virginia, made by C. H. Hamilton, of the V. P. I. Experiment Station, only 2.9 per cent of the 1033 rural ministers who answered his questionnaire are actively supporting 4-H club work. The scout movement has meant much for the city youth. The city churches have capitalized it.

I know of only a few instances where rural churches as a body have actively undertaken to foster 4-H club work. Among them are a number of Methodist churches in Texas. They call this plan "The Edgewood Plan" because it was first tried out in a community of that name.

Dr. McLaughlin made this comment on the plan in his editorial in the July issue of *The Earnest Worker*. "This plan is God's plan. It calls for tithes of labor and harvests. It is not strange that the Texas Conference paid 86 per cent of its conference claims last year since the rural churches are using the Edgewood Plan."

CHAPTER XVII

A COUNTRY CHURCH SOLVES THE RECREATIONAL PROBLEM

J. M. Walker

By the terms of our program our interest is limited to the study of the recreational life of country young people. By this it is not meant that the recreational life of country young people is more important than that of their city cousins, nor are we to conclude that their recreations are intrinsically different from those of the city youths. As a matter of fact they are not. What appeals to one will appeal, in the main, to the other. What uplifts one will uplift the other. And it is equally true, what degrades and destroys the moral fiber of one, will degrade and destroy the moral fiber of the other. Looked at from this standpoint we might make no distinction whatever in the discussion of this subject. What we do want to emphasize, however, is the importance and the timeliness of the study of recreational life for young people growing up in the country.

The problem of the recreational life of city young people has already received large consideration; and it is being dealt with more and more effectively each year. The intense need there has provoked the churches to action. These, in coöperation wth the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the Boy Scouts of America, the Camp Fire Girls, Parks and Playground Commissions, and the many civic and social clubs, are dealing more or less successfully with the whole youth problem of the city. No amount of money is spared that these organizations may be properly manned and equipped for their work. Their every need is readily met so that they may adequately function the whole year round. This is all well and good, and is as it ought to be. This work is the pride of our city life. We would not have it otherwise, rather we would urge an increased activity along all these lines. The church and city life alike has suffered all too long and far too much already from their neglect of the play life of their youths. But what we would note is this, while we have been greatly concerned about our city young people, no such united effort has been made to provide an adequate program for the play life of the country boy and girl. On the whole they have been left to shift for themselves. This has led the gifted writer, Gilbert Symons, to surmise as follows: "We might be a great deal happier as a church and sounder as a nation if more of the care that has been lavished upon our congested centers had been shared with the village and open country."

In developing life in the country, especially young life, we have to do with the beginnings of things. From the country comes not only a large part of the city's wealth, but most of her leadership as well. Here we have to do also with the opening up of the fountains of the church's life. We are preparing seed beds for the town and city churches. We are making the men and women who are to be the future leaders in the church. And we are setting agoing great molding and uplifting influences for the Kingdom of God and the church in every land. We are building a nation's life worthy of our best efforts. Would that we had had the vision and the grace, in the days gone by, to have shared more equally our city's wealth with our country neighbors! What a difference there would have been in our church, our city, our country, and our national life!

A COUNTRY LIFE RENAISSANCE

We rejoice, however, with a joy that thrills us, when we think how, at last, both the church and the state are waking up to this situation. They are now turning their attention to the country life and to the country church as never before, following the lead of the great national associations. Civic clubs and state welfare agencies of every kind are offering their aid and advice on all hands. And then there is the recent Federal Farm Board appointed by the President. It's true, some of these do not seem to know what it is all about, but they are standing by, determined to do their bit whatever it is. So the hope grows brighter each day that at last something definite will be done to relieve the condition and bring about a new day in the country and the country work.

In this neglect and general deficiency in country life, in the past, nothing has been more apparent than her neglect of social and recreational facilities for her young people. Up to the present time little worth while has come from an outside source to meet the situation. And there has been a woeful lack of leadership in the country itself for the doing of this thing. The farmer, in many cases, has been so busy on his farm making a living that he has not taken much time to devote to the rearing of a godly family and the developing of the well-rounded life of his children. His special care has been his corn, his cotton, his wheat, his tobacco, his potatoes, his hay, his horses, his cows, his sheep, and his pigs. His children have been left "just to grow up." They were a sort of by-product of the farm anyway. Recreation he often confounded with idleness or exercise, deeming it only a useless waste of energy; better employed in pulling weeds, hoeing corn, picking cotton, or washing dishes. What was true with the farmer was all too true, in many cases, with the farmer's wife. She was so busy in the kitchen with her cookies, or about her washing and ironing, or her mending and sewing, that she had but little time or energy left to give to the problem of furnishing a wholesome play program for her children. The steady grind and the monotony of her long hours of work robbed her of the originality so necessary to a proper play life, and left her at the close of the day depleted, and with no desire to cultivate the play life of her children. True, there were parents, and not a few of them, who had the vision of their children's need in this respect, and who followed the vision. Some of us who came up under those conditions will never cease to be thankful for it. But speaking generally, this attitude complained of has been all too common throughout the country.

But when you come to think of it, it is not strange that this should have been so; especially when you consider the part the minister, the natural leader of community forces, has played in this matter. For the most part, his attitude has been that of "hands off," deeming it a matter outside the sphere of the church's activity. Many of us who are still young in the ministry, went through our seminaries and on out into the field, not so much as having ever been made aware that there was really such a problem waiting the church to face. And "like priest like people," was especially true here; so the church passed up the whole matter.

But that day is gone. Now we are rapidly coming to see that this is a problem, and one that must be dealt with seriously. It is claiming the attention of religious writers as few subjects ever did. Almost every day some new book comes from the press purposing to show the way to the solution of this problem. On the whole it is the most popular study now going on in this renaissance period of country life.

The Value of Recreation

The basic conception lying back of this new interest in recreation is the realization of the fact that life is a unit. The condition of our bodies affects our minds, our morals, and our spiritual life. And if we are to become what we ought to be as Christians, and are unwilling to be satisfied with anything less, then we must have a sound body for a sound mind and a strong spiritual nature. Moreover, we are fast coming to realize that religion has to do with the whole of life, or better still, life is all religious. We cannot dissect it, and label one part: "For Spiritual Values," and another part for something else, and still a third part for something altogether different. Life is a unit, and the whole of life must contribute to the formation of character. To this contribution, play, the free spontaneous expression of the inner life or emotions, adds her part; and we may join with the poet Browning in saying:

> Let us not always say,
> "Spite of this flesh today
> I strove, made head, gained ground on the whole!"
> As the bird wings and sings,
> Let us cry, "All good things
> Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh
> helps soul!"

A people's recreation is the barometer of their civilization. Dr. Luther Gulick, in his book, *The Philosophy of Play*, says: "Play is and should be the pursuit of the ideal." He further adds: "I am convinced that individuals are more completely revealed in their play than in any other circumstances." Richardson in his book, *The Church at Play*, affirms:

> If we want to know what a child or youth really is, we are invited to watch him play. The freedom of the play spirit makes self-revelation more nearly complete than does the strain of toil or the sense of responsibility. [He also adds:] To understand play is to understand life, and to be able to direct the motives that find expression in play is to be able permanently to influence character.

To the same effect are the words of Curtis in his book, *Play And Recreation:*

> Although play is the one activity in life in which the whole child takes part, parents who have not thought much about it often confuse it with idleness and regard it as far less important for the child's welfare than the tasks and duties that they assign. But nature is far wiser than parents, and pursues her wonted way quite oblivious of their opinions, and in her secret heart she has determined that the child shall live in a world of make-believe, and through its occupations and experiences shall be mainly fitted for the experiences that come afterward. We are apt to speak of childhood as a period of preparation, but when we come to weigh the gains of life after the struggles and victories are over, I doubt whether we will find anything in business or scholarship or politics that has weighed heavier in the scale, that has meant more to the spirit, than the joyous self-

forgetful play with brothers and sisters in our childhood home.

In that striking book of Cabot's, *What Men Live By,* he specifies four things: Work, Play, Love and Worship. Recreation rightly directed, is a most potent influence in the proper physical growth and development of young life. It gives the growing child increasing mastery of its body through muscular coördination, and the elimination of useless movements. It recreates nervous energy for all ages, and often is as desirable for restoring the exhausted body as pure rest itself. The chances are, the man who has regular recreational periods will stay physically fit, mentally alert, and morally straight. His social nature will be developed. When men can play together they can work together. It also develops the spirit of team work, so much needed in this day and generation. In short, since we learn how to live by living, a well supervised play program furnishes the finest kind of opportunity for our moral growth.

THE CHURCH'S RECREATIONAL TASK

Now that we are beginning to discover the real value of recreations we come to find that the play life of our young people is largely controlled and directed by forces outside the church. This is true also with the amusements and various attractions that are offered, such as "movies," theaters, dance halls, pool rooms, amusement parks, and swimming pools. While it would not be right to make a wholesale condemnation of all these with one stroke, still their influence, in many cases, is far from what it should be. In some cases it is decidedly bad. The movie is seldom good. The pool room and the dance hall as now conducted often destroy the finer senses of the moral fiber of our young people. And yet these institutions are taking their nightly toll. Young people are social by nature, and they are going to find some satisfaction for that craving. If they cannot find it at home or the church they will seek it elsewhere. As a matter of fact, thousands of them are flocking into the cities every night for these amusements. The good roads, the automobile, and short hours of work, have made this possible. This is a real problem for the country church to face. But the question is often asked: "What warrant or what right has the church to be going into the business of providing recreations for its young people?" Well, I think we can safely say: God knows there is need of somebody going into the field. We need to face frankly and fairly these questions: Who is going to furnish the recreational standards that will make or mar the moral life of our youths? Who will provide their amusements? Who will direct their play life? What is to be our attitude toward the whole social life of the country young people? Are we going to leave them alone, and thus compel them to find their pleasures, and get their recreations wherever they can find them? No! We have had too much of that already. Something must be done. The church has a responsibility in this matter. She dare not shirk it longer. On the contrary, we have learned that through properly directed recreations and amusements the church has a golden opportunity to build into the lives of her young people those noble qualities of friendliness, coöperation, sympathy, courage, decision, fairness, unselfishness, and kindred virtues. This is an opportunity the church with a vision will not miss. Many of them already are busy setting up just such a wholesome program, one that will attract the young people, and at the same time, serve as an uplifting influence in their lives.

In doing this, the church is not trying to compete with other recreational agencies; nor is she, as sometimes falsely accused, "trying to mix oil and water in undertaking to coach a baseball team and hold a prayer meeting." She is simply preparing for her youths a wholesome feast instead of letting them go into the towns and cities near-by and buy. The Methodist Episcopal Church at its General Conference in 1920, aptly set forth this aim in these words:

> While we are aware that the improper amusements are a "fruitful source of spiritual decline," we also believe that the social and recreational instinct is God-given, and if properly guided, will strengthen rather than injure the spiritual life. The Church must no longer allow her youths to "go into near-by villages and buy themselves victuals of social life," but rather, should say: "Sit down and eat" of the clean wholesome things provided by the Church, which seeks to build a social and recreational life that is spiritual, and a spiritual life that is social and recreational.

BUILDING A RECREATIONAL PROGRAM

In building a proper recreational program we must ever keep in mind the community's need. What do the young people need? And how far are those needs being met? The church has no business going out to compete with other wholesome forms of recreations. Jesus would never have worked a miracle to feed a man who had just had his dinner. He was concerned with supplying *need*. The church is here to serve. It isn't right to put on a program for the sake of simply building up the church. Of course, we realize that building up the community and building up the church are intimately related; what we are trying to guard against is the idea that the church is here for the purpose of building herself up. We repeat, the church is here to serve. Keep that principle first and the other things will take their proper place. What do our young people in the country need, and how may we approach them so as to get them to take those things which we have for them, and which they need? They should grow as Jesus grew, "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Consequently they need to be amused and informed and inspired, so that in body and in spirit they will reach toward the full stature of the Christian life. In no case must the religious standards of the church be compromised in the interest of a successful recreational program. To do so is to fail to grasp the true meaning of play or to understand the nature and function of the play program. Who does not like the story of the little Jap who had been brought up in a Christian home? He had made a wonderful kite and it was flying to his heart's desire, and he cried: "Look, Jesus, look." Play and work and all living ought to be a part of His work and program. And all this means the church's work.

THE FOURFOLD TASK

The church that seriously faces this problem of providing a proper recreational program will at once be brought face to face with a fourfold task. 1. The first of these is the securing of an adequate organization to supervise the recreations. Without it any program is liable to become spasmodic and lacking in coördination with the whole church program. The simplest method is to have a small committee appointed from the session, or whatever is the governing body in the church, which shall be held responsible for the whole program. This committee then forms an Advisory Council by associating with it a committee having representatives on it from all the organizations. And since the program more vitally concerns the young people than any other group, from this group a large number is selected for the council.

2. The council having been set up, the next step is to define the task and to select those activities that will best accomplish this aim. This is easier said than done. The play sea has not yet been very well charted, and at times we are not certain of our direction; neither do we know the full value of our play program. It is true we have before us some general things we wish to see accomplished. We want our programs to contribute to the physical, mental, social, and spiritual side of life—or to the whole life. Then, again, we know that our programs must be graded. Provision must be made for all ages, and for all the people, not just a few. We are engaged in developing the play life of the whole congregation. We need to keep in mind also, that in developing the play program through the year new objectives will be constantly arising, other than those we have selected for ourselves. And so, while the year's program should be made out in advance, provision should be made for changes in it and interruptions. The council will find invaluable help for their programs from the many new books on this subject now coming from the press. Every council, however, must take into consideration its own local needs and vary its programs accordingly.

3. To this council is given the further task of selecting the Director of Recreations. In most cases this person will be the Director of Religious Education, where a

church has one. In many churches no one is selected at all, instead, volunteer workers are used. This can be very well done in a church where there are a number of highly trained leaders. In that case it is most desirable to have a leader for each department of work. Intensive study can then be given to age groups, and the program arranged more perfectly to meet their needs.

4. The fourth of these tasks, which the council must face, is the providing of proper equipment for recreational purposes. In most country churches this is meager. The cost has seemed prohibitive. However, it is not necessary that there be such a great outlay of capital with which to begin this work. The equipment need not be elaborate. Tennis, basketball, volleyball, handball, baseball, and scores of other wholesome games can be played out in the open. It costs little to go camping with Boy Scouts or Camp Fire Girls or 4-H clubs. Much of the recreational program will be in the nature of a service program, which may be done without any special equipment. A desire for these things, and a determination to have them, are the essentials.

Where there is an all-the-year-round program being put on, churches are coming to see the necessity of some kind of community house for this work. Where the play life is developed to any great extent it seems an absolute necessity. A good community house solves the problem of winter activities, and furnishes an ideal place for all indoor recreations and social gatherings. A model plant of this kind is the Steele Creek Community House, belonging to the Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, located just outside of the city of Charlotte, North Carolina. And since it is recognized by many church leaders as a model plant of this kind, a brief sketch of the building and its use may not be out of place in closing this chapter, even though the writer is pastor of the church. The structure is ninety by fifty-three feet, constructed without pillars, and so arranged as to provide a magnificent auditorium, stage, dressing-room, kitchen, club room, hot and cold shower baths (when completed) and cloakrooms. The auditorium, with its massive fireplaces on each side, offers a most attractive place for social gatherings of every kind. Here we have a regulation basketball court, a place for volleyball, handball, tennis, and all indoor games. The building is used not only for sports, but for Bible dramatics, and pageantry. It is to be fitted out with a combination slide and moving picture machine. Here the young people give their plays with the very best setting. Here they hold their stunt-night performances from time to time. All church dinners and suppers of every kind are served here. The men of the church hold their meetings in this building. It is the place of meeting for all community clubs, social and welfare agencies, and state demonstration workers. In truth it is, as it was intended to be, the center of the social and recreational life of the whole community and especially that of the young people. You ask the results derived from it, and I tell you the theory works itself out in practice. Of the hundreds of young people who have grown up in this community in recent years, there has not been one who has not given his heart to the Master, and become an active church member. Many of them have gone into the ministry, several to the foreign field, and a host of them are taking their place in the church as officers, teachers, and leaders in every worthy movement. The church that loves her young people, and provides for their every need will be loved by them, and they will find joy in giving their lives in service to the Kingdom.

PART VIII

FUTURE

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

Rolvix Harlan

There are many who insist that the country church has no future. One such, a Professor of Sociology in a State Agricultural College, puts it bluntly: "the rural church is a failure." He goes on to say:

> There is no need to recount the results of the many surveys that have been made from every angle of approach. They all tell the same story: "the rural church is a failure." We subsidize certain demonstrational fields and then go out and tell the world. But the world knows that is *not* the rural church. The world knows that is just a thing dressed up for show purposes.

He further goes on to denounce the denominational rivalry which has been the chief cause of the failure, and his future of the country church is a contingent future, based on getting rid speedily of its hampering handicaps of divisions and outside interference of so-called denominational leaders.

The "sob-stuff" of a plethora of surveys, studies and special articles, seem to corroborate this view.

On the other hand there are those who speak of a new day for the country church and who at least try to be optimistic and paint a rather rosy future. The recent survey of country churches, and the life and organizations within these churches, made by the Rural Sociology Division of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, asserts that the country church in Virginia is by no means the decadent institution it is sometimes pictured to be in other states. According to the best available figures, 42 per cent of the white rural population were church members in 1926, as compared with 37 per cent in 1916; rural church groups—white and negro—have increased in average size from 100 in 1906 to 120 in 1926; rural ministers are better trained; equipment is improving; programs of young people's work are being enlarged, and so on. Rural churches are in difficulty in places, the report shows, but, on the whole, the church is a going concern, clearly intertwined with whatever future rural life and industry has in the state.

Those who hold to the idea of the decadence and possible extinction of the country church and who are pessimistic because of certain facts and tendencies, can cite the fact that early Christianity lost Asia Minor and the entire region south of the Mediterranean where the church made its early triumphs. They can also show that Christian institutions are not necessarily indestructible, since Mohammedanism has taken possession of certain areas once held by the Christian church.

Against such a prospect for the country church may be urged the fact that it is deeply rooted in sentiments of an enduring sort, and such as are not easily abandoned. It would seem that, wherever any considerable number of people live the civilized life, religious sentiment will continue the church, at least some sort of church or religious institution. Then, too, rather definite interests tend to hold it. It is a widely diffused sub-cultural pattern; some think a universal culture complex, closely related to fundamental human needs. If religion and morality are abiding interests of human nature, some institution which conserves religious beliefs and which functions to condition human nature in definite religious patterns, will be found in every complete culture.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH DEFINED

Just what do we mean by the country church? The term may be correctly applied to a church in the open country which serves a neighborhood of people, all of whom are farmers. It may be applied to a church in a hamlet where less than a hundred persons live in a cluster of houses, most of whom are farmers, and where the church serves those living in the hamlet and its surroundings. It may be applied to a village church where the membership is made up of villagers and farmer folk in varying proportions, but where agriculture is the chief occupation and concern of the economic life. It is sometimes applied to churches in small towns up to even five thousand in population, where a portion of the membership live on farms, and where the prosperity of the community is clearly based on or bound up with agriculture.

Each of these types of country churches will probably have a different future, in respect to the number of each type that the future will see and the degree of strength and adequacy with which the type of church serves its membership and community. Perhaps we ought to speak of the future of the town and country church, and take especial notice of the relation of the church to its community in the future, as one phase of our subject.

It seems fairly clear that the *open country church* will disappear in many individual instances and that entire sections will have very few such churches. This change will follow changes and enlargement of community boundaries. It seems equally clear that *the village churches* will constitute an increasing proportion of the country churches as village and open country are more closely integrated. It is not equally clear how well and in just what ways the small city or town church will serve its rural constituency in the future, but great possibilities for more complete integration of the life of towns and their immediate hinterland do now exist, and it is altogether possible that administrators of church life and organization will take advantage of this situation.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND OTHER AGENCIES

After thus defining our subject and briefly classifying country churches, it seems well to remind ourselves of the fact that the church which serves country people is bound up in intimate relationship with country life as a whole. Its fortunes will, therefore, depend in many significant ways on the future of the school; on the form and methods employed in agriculture, whether it is to be domestic or industrialized. Its business interests will also depend on the methods of marketing and all other farm enterprises. In short, the church is only one aspect of the country life problem, and will suffer change and need readjustment to meet changes in country life in general. While rooted in more conservative sentiments, on the whole, than most other institutions, the form and functions of the church as a community agency will inevitably conform in time to the pattern which country life takes as a whole. No amount of shouting of leaders, and no amount of specialized effort and expense financed at a distance can permanently prevent this ultimate general integration.

The future of the country church is, therefore, a part of the future of agriculture as an industry and a social mode.

It is well, also to remind ourselves that whatever community organization complex prevails in a given section of our civilization, it will have great influence, indeed, preponderating influence on the church. Community agencies are interecting and coöperative in spite of themselves.

Thus, whenever community organization is dislocated or undergoing rapid change, some or all institutions will be in trouble or decadent. This accounts for the decadence of churches of the open country, the hamlet, and even in villages in many parts of the United States.

Emotional Sects

This decadence of the country church which we see in many sections need not fill the entire picture of the future of the church, nor intrigue us too completely. It is an inevitable phase, and in a sense a passing phase. For example, with the waning of denominationalism in certain regions—a fact that conditions the future of the country church—and with the folk depletion of certain less fertile regions, we see the rise in the country of special religious groups with inadequate or partial cultural conditioning. I refer to the Holy Rollers and Nazarenes and Pentecostal type of church life. These forms of institutional life and religion have taken possession of whole regions. Such expressions of religious experience, with the unsteady and uncertain church life incidental to them, will doubtless increase in many sections as social dislocation in rural life takes place. Isolated or incomplete community life in rural areas will continue to be infested with such organizations, but as education and outside contacts increase they will disappear, and standard forms of church life take their place. Unstable emotionalism thrives in connection with folk depletion, isolation or community dislocation. In all such cases inadequate moral and religious life will be found in the country.

A little religious group, calling themselves the Firmy Foundation, is found in a certain rural area. Too ignorant even to spell the title of its organization correctly, but deeming itself the restorer of true Biblical religion, it has named itself after the line of the great hymn: "How Firm A Foundation." This is about the worst reported; but there are many such, and a casual student of church life in the country might easily be led to believe that the church has gone crazy or is at least feeble-minded.

It is also true that there are numerous country churches whose local leadership is opinionated and stubborn, and although the church still holds at least nominal fellowship with some larger denominational organization, the local church thwarts social progress and obstructs the moral and social life of the community. These churches will probably die out. They can hardly be conceived as dominating the situation in the future.

GENERAL FACTS AS TO THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

Judging the future by the past and as a continuation of present tendencies we see at work, we can assert that some pronounced changes will take place. Country churches as a whole have already gone through at least three fairly distinct stages: the pioneer stage when the country was new and in process of being settled; the stage of prosperity and growth in both numbers and local strength, sometimes, however, burdened by a building debt, the result of overambition in building or loss of building by fire or other catastrophe; the period of struggle against rural depletion or rural tardiness. The second stage is sometimes called the family stage or the golden era of country church life, when agriculture was the most honorable of the vocations a family could follow.

There are a few churches in the pioneer stage in the West and in newer sections of the country, and a larger number in the family stage, especially in the Middle West among the earlier immigrants from northern Europe, who are among our most efficient agriculturalists, and with whom the church is a firmly established institution, as, for example, the Scandinavian Lutherans and some others. This type of church is also found in the more established and stable rural communities of the Middle Atlantic region; and such do not constitute a part of the country church problem, at least at present. But in most parts of the United States we are entering the stage of readjustment to redirected rural life. The hoe farmer is disappearing and the machine farmer is arriving and agriculture is relatively depressed. The church, to survive, must pass from *drift to mastery,* and by study of its local situation readjust as best it can. This is the stage of spiritual husbandry and rehabilitation of the entire church life and program.

Church leaders are coming to sense the rural problem as a whole. This is a significant fact and augurs well for the future. Enough surveys have been made to enable the country church to become conscious of its plight and its major difficulties. Other surveys will be made, but the future will see fewer of them than the recent past. The findings of these surveys will be reinterpreted from time to time, and census materials will add to our definite knowledge of facts and conditions affecting the church. A fairly scientific and informed approach to the entire situation is now well assured, so far as church administrators and leaders are concerned. Less uninformed promotion and unwise Home Mission support will be given in the future to establish or continue ill-advised church projects. Home Mission activities will look to spiritual husbandry, and more efficient use of available resources will be made, with the church as an agent of adequate community life in mind. Much still needs to be done, however, to educate properly Home Mission administrators who have had an overdeveloped denominational complex and who have used monies to galvanize into life a feeble and unnecessary church organization.

The number of persons intelligently interested in the country church will increase and specialists to advise and guide are arising. It is significant that an Institute of Public Affairs gives the church of the country a place in its deliberations. Much experimentation will take place and a constructive approach will develop.

To be more specific, we may expect to see a closer relation of mutual helpfulness come about between the country church and the extension service of agricultural colleges. The colleges have discovered the church, and the churches are becoming aware of the possibilities in a closer relation to the colleges. A greater social service will thus be rendered by the churches, and a church that really renders a social service will not be allowed to die.

The experiments that have been made in furnishing every community the service of the church as in Montana, by the Home Missions Council directing an interdenominational effort, will be used in the older states. Denominational loyalties and inertia will retard this movement, but progress in redirection, relocation and adjustment by assistance of Home Mission funds will be made, nevertheless.

Consolidation within denominations made possible by good roads and better facilities of travel and communication will continue to take place. The denominational community church, with allocated responsibility, on a broader basis of membership and fellowship and service will increase in numbers and influence. This will help meet the wasteful duplication of churches and release funds for unchurched regions. Dead local churches will be allowed to stay dead where no ascertained need of their presence and service is discoverable. The errors of excessive promotion will tend to disappear.

Consolidations within denominations and across denominational lines will tend to follow consolidation of schools and other community agencies. Children will be brought into the church school in buses, and a more adequate church school can be maintained. Consolidation across denominational lines will continue to be difficult and the principle of survival of the fittest will often be the only way of adjustment, wasteful as it is. There seems to be too little social wisdom to find adequate techniques to prevent this waste.

Reciprocal exchanges such as are taking place in New England, and occasionally in other states, will continue. By this method a weak church discontinues and turns the community over to a stronger church. The reverse takes place in some other community as a sort of compensation or plan for allocating responsibility.

The Larger Parish Plan will continue to be promoted and may be expected to furnish a solution in many rural areas.

In an increasing number of cases churches in small cities or federations of churches, will come to be conscious of the immediate hinterland, and will establish outstations and other forms of contacts with suburban and rural communities. It is coming to be clearly seen that city churches often prosper which have contacts with outlying districts. This is following the example and profiting by the social wisdom of trade organizations and other social agencies. The Lansing Plan by which a city church, in Lansing, Michigan, assumed responsibility for some six almost decadent rural religious enterprises, and helped finance the support of an associate pastor to serve these country districts, is a good example.

Country Church Leadership for the Future

The country church has now come to be seen as a new frontier to be taken or retaken by men properly trained and definitely consecrated to the task. Seminaries will give more adequate attention to the training of such men and a fellowship of service will probably arise in which the morale of the country minister will greatly improve. This is one of the greatest needs of the country church and efforts are being made to meet it.

Experimentation in combining teaching of country school and ministering to country churches in one and the same person will be made, and is a hopeful line of development, although hindered by our tradition of separation of church and state. It is done in Europe.

Some evidence is found for believing that women will be used as leaders in teaching and ministering to country churches, but prediction as to the extent and probable success of this innovation cannot now be made. That the schools have come to use women so largely would suggest at least the possibility of their use more widely in religious education, under supervision of a pastor or minister appointed or chosen for an area, rather than a merely local situation. Religious education and supervision of the character building activities of the young people will receive more emphasis in the rural community, and in this task both school teachers and women religious workers will be utilized in whole or part-time vocations.

Church Equipment and Changing Methods of Work

Country churches will change gradually from the one-room building, now so frequently found, to the many-room building suited to educational and social service programs. Parent-teacher organizations will adapt their programs of interest and activities to building up the church. Seasonal activities, such as Daily Vacation Bible School and group organizational activities, so well developed in urban communities, will be utilized in the work of the country church.

The country church will have a relatively less influential place in the civilization of to-morrow, but it is not a decadent institution. We may well visualize the picture of a new rural church arising out of the present halting, inadequate church, conscious of its possibilities and resources, led by trained men and women, with a program adapted to modern life and meeting all the community needs. A new day for the country church will dawn. It awaits an intelligent direction from those who see the need, who are able to analyze the total situation, and who will help control and guide the forces which will bring it about.

CHAPTER XIX

THE RELATION OF CITY AND COUNTRY CHURCHES

GOODRIDGE A. WILSON, JR.

THE future of the country church lies largely in the hands of the city church. Inevitably so, and through neither voluntary surrender of self-determination, on the one hand, nor deliberate assumption of power, on the other, but through the fiat of social and economic facts.

SOURCES OF POWER

To live and thrive, a church must serve. To serve, a church must have the power to serve. To have the power to serve, a church must have access to the sources of power. Sources of service power are both spiritual and material, both personal and pecuniary. From whence comes a church's spiritual power to serve? From the effective working personnel of the church. From whence comes a church's material power to serve? From the money, or wealth, available for church purposes. The effective working personnel of the church is concentrating in the city. Wealth available for church purposes is concentrating in the city. The economic and social trend indicates that this concentration will continue with increasing intensity, which means that city church control of church resources, control of the church's men and money, brain and brawn, energy and material, vision and spirit, will be intensified in the future. The country has and will continue to have certain available church resources within itself; it always has and always will have large potential resources to be developed. But church resources of the country are steadily draining into the city and the volume of the flow is steadily increasing, so that whatever may be the present or future actual and potential resources of the country church the control of church resources, as a whole, is placed in the city church. This concentration of control is already an accomplished fact. Every indication points to a more and more overwhelming preponderance in the hands of the city church. If the city church so exercises the control that it has resources in men and in money as to give to the country church a powerful ministry and an adequate equipment, the future of the country church is bright with life and power to the glory of God and the health of the nation.

If the city church will so exercise its control over church over the men and the money of the church as to deny to the country a ministry of power and an equipment of adequacy, the future of the country church is gloomy with languishing futility that will be an increasing reproach and menace.

UNITY OF CHURCH, TASK, AND RESOURCES

A church, whether located in the country or in the city, is the church applying its resources at a given spot for the accomplishment of the church's task. Country church and city church, they are one and their task is one. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." And there is one common task of the church: "The perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." To perform the church's task at any given place, that is to have a church anywhere, a lower trinity must be present. A church must have a field to work, men to do the work, and means with which to work. Where the first exists the other two must be assembled from the resources of the church or there cannot be a church. To assemble men and means in any given field in greater measure than justified by the requirements of the field is wasteful folly; to assemble men and means in any given field beyond its relative importance, so as to favor a less important to the detriment of a more important field, is also folly. Important fields in the country where there are churches are having their resources depleted. Important fields in the country where there are no churches are lying with undeveloped resources. Wisdom requires that the brains and the zeal of the church, particularly of the city church with its preponderance of control, be applied to the problem of distribution, so that these fields may be proportionately supplied from church resources with men to do the work and means with which to work. City church and country church, they are not separate and distinct entities; they are coördinate and mutually dependent parts of one whole. The church is one, its task is one, its resources should be so mobilized and administered as to be available for the common task. This is the difficult and delicate and crucial problem upon the solution of which not only the life of country churches but the health of the church depends. It cannot be solved without whole-souled and persistent application by the powerful and controlling element of the church that is centered in cities.

THE COUNTRY FIELD

The required field is ready for laborers willing and able to work it; sufficiently needy to justify the expenditure of resources far vaster than have ever yet been turned to it. There is and there always will be a vital need for the country church, with opportunities of ever-widening potentialities in human lives to serve, human wants to supply, human souls to save. The problem of increasing difficulty is the securing of men and of means, resources that must be supplied to a great extent now and to a greater extent in the future by the city church. There is no other place from whence these resources can come, because they are in no other place and because the country has by the law of love and the law of equity a right to its due share of them.

Little need be said here about the field of the country church. For the Master's ministry of preaching and teaching and healing there is ample scope and endless variety of opportunity among the country people of to-day and to-morrow. There are and there always will be plenty of country people, a different sort of people, perhaps, but people, and plenty of them. Conditions change and will change. People move and will move from the land, but people stay and will stay, people come and will come to the country. The Master's ministry remains unchanged in substance, ever-changing in form, adapting itself with infinite flexibility to ever-changing conditions. The widening potentialities of the country church that ministers in His name became manifest with the adaptation of policy to the actual lives and living conditions of country people in an industrialized, machine-motored, city-centering civilization.

Men for the Work

There is not and there never will be a dearth of country people, but there is a dearth of country workers, both clerical and lay, competent to meet and able to visualize the actual needs of the people. The dearth of competent workers will continue with increasing intensity until a way is found to distribute to the country its equitable share of the church's resources in men. That problem must be worked out, and worked out mainly by the city church. The city church has the power of attracting strong ministers to itself, which is the power of drawing strong ministers away from the country church. It is exercising that power. The city church also has, to a larger degree than may be generally realized, the power to send strong ministers into the country fields. The welfare of the country church, and also of the city church, awaits the exercise of that power.

The country church requires a strong ministry, such as successful country churches of the past have enjoyed and for lack of which many country churches of to-day are suffering. A mediocre, makeshift ministry means a mediocre, makeshift church. Especially is this true of the country, where, more than elsewhere, the many functions of the church devolve upon the minister. The country church must have a resident ministry. In by-gone days many country churches got along very well with an itinerant ministry. They can do so no more. It may not always be necessary or even advisable for the resident country minister actually to live in the open country or the country village or hamlet. In some cases it is essential. In others it may be better for him to live in a near-by town or city. But his place of residence must be so situated that he can keep in close and constant touch with everything that is going on in his country field, and wherever his house may be his heart must be in the country. In interest and in life he must be one with the people whom he serves, a leader and commander among the people, if he has it in him to lead and command; but completely identified with them in sympathy and understanding and community of interest. A strong, intelligent, spiritual, and resourceful ministry will vitalize the country church. With such skippers and helmsmen the country church will ride the currents of life; without them it will sink, be dashed to pieces, or drift aimlessly around with the débris and trash in the back eddies of time.

With notable exceptions, and please note the exceptions, strong ministers are attracted to the city to-day and the country gets the leavings. More and more under the stress of circumstances they are going to the cities. Conditions in the country are more and more demanding strong pastors; and conditions in both country and city are making it more and more impossible for the country to supply itself. Until that state of affairs is remedied the future can hold forth but little hope for the country church. It must be remedied. Not reversed, but remedied! Strong ministers must continue to go to the city where strong men congregate and must have strong spiritual leadership. But they must also go to the country and they will go there in sufficient numbers when the city church sets itself deliberately, intelligently, and persistently to sending them there. The same forces that draw industrial, professional, and business leaders to the city draw church leaders there also, and the pull of these forces can only be balanced by the city church throwing a due share of its strength into the pull of the country's appeal.

Workers other than ministers are sorely needed in the country. Men and women of consecration and zeal and the qualifications for the work must be had. Along at least two lines the city church must contribute to meeting this need. In this day of rapid and easy transportation city men and women can themselves go out and do much of the work. Many country localities, however, are too remote from town or city for this method to be effective or even used at all, and in all localities local leadership is desirable and should be developed. Here, then, is the second line: The city church must recognize, assume, and attempt seriously to discharge its full share of responsibility for developing competent local lay workers in the country fields.

WHAT THE CITY CHURCH CAN DO

The minister of the gospel must have a salary commensurate in some degree with his ability. Few men can afford to refuse an adequate for an inadequate salary. The salary in the city is generally good, in the country generally poor or non-existent. There is not enough money in the country available for church purposes to pay a good salary. The wealth of the church is in the city.

A man feels that he owes it to himself and to his God to do his best work. Few men can do their best work in isolation. They feel the need of moral and material support, the backing of an effective organization. The strength of church organization is not in the country. It is in the city. No church can function properly without proper equipment. The wealth that supplies church equipment is not in the country. It is in the city. Few ministers can rise so far above the level of human beings as to be willing to work under the handicap of unjustly low prestige, in positions that subject them unjustly to the assumption of inferiority. The city pastor enjoys an unearned prestige over his country brother.

If the city church, where the leadership that shapes the mental attitude of the church is concentrated, sets itself to creating a psychology of honor to the country minister according to but not beyond his real deserts; if the city church, where is the strength of organization, backs up country minister and people with moral and material and personal support; if the city church, where the money of the church is concentrated, will give back to the country church in money for pastors' salaries and for equipment a fair return for what it receives, men of vision and sense and soundness of judgment, with the love of the Lord in their hearts and the call of the country in their souls, will stand by the work, knowing that they have a fair and reasonable chance to accomplish something worthy of their powers. Otherwise their good sense will drive them away from it, because of its hopeless and unfair handicaps.

SUMMARY

In a word, the city church can and must visualize itself and the country church as constituent and necessary parts of one whole, must see that the city field and the country field are one, indissoluble, and must lend itself and its resources whole-heartedly to developing and maintaining the work in the whole field. It is not paternalism and it is not charity that the country church needs from the city and will need in larger and larger measure. It is coöperation and justice. The city church is steadily and with increasing volume drawing unto itself the strength of country churches. The city church imbibing strength continuously must continuously and effectively maintain and replenish its source of supply, by giving back to the country church in money, in moral support, and in spiritual leadership a fair return for what it receives. And it must be done on broad business principles as a just and sane business policy of the church.

The purpose of this paper is to state the problem, not to solve it. The logic of the situation compels the working out of a fair and equitable distribution of church resources as between country and city. That system has not yet been devised for the American church. It requires the wisdom of high statesmanship to work it out. When it is devised and put into effective operation the future of the country church will be assured. It will be done. The logic of the situation compels it. God grant that it may be accomplished before we have a completely paganized countryside to redeem!

CHAPTER XX

YOUTH AND AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Henry W. McLaughlin

O beautiful for spacious skies,
  For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties,
  Above the fruited plain:
America! America!
  God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood,
  From sea to shining sea.

Much has been written about serving youth. How much more worth while to inspire youth with the spirit of service! We have been talking about reaching our young people when we should have been thinking of challenging them with some adventure of great achievement. It is true that there is an epidemic of crime, but we cannot cure it by discussion, neither by passing laws, not even by law-enforcement, as important as that is. Not many people are deterred from committing crime because they are afraid they will be caught or because they dread the penalties of the law. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Produce in men the right thoughts, the right emotions, give to them the proper ideals and motives and you will have people of character who will constitute a trustworthy citizenship. Such a citizenship is a guarantee of a democracy that is safe for the world. The Scout and 4-H club movements are teaching us how to challenge youth with worthwhile tasks and to give them lofty ideals. The church may not only cooperate with these worthwhile agencies but, with its gospel of grace and transformation, is prepared to go even farther in planting and fostering lofty ideals.

PHYSICAL BEAUTY

It is exceedingly important that America have economic symmetry and beauty. To that end vast sums of money and untold energies are being devoted by our nation. Political, commercial and industrial leaders have committed themselves to the task, as individuals and as organizations. It is also devoutly to be desired that our country have physical beauty. We sing "America, the Beautiful." It is true that God has given us a beautiful land, yet too many of us have been iconoclasts. We have done little to make America more beautiful, and have often ruthlessly destroyed what God has given us. The beauty of the British Isles and many parts of Europe show what attention to the countrysides can do. The rural park movement, which is of comparatively recent origin, marks the beginning of a better day. These parks, national, state and county, have an inestimable value. Some one has called them "the super-universities of nature." As an example, we have the Shenandoah National Park area, much of which lies within sight of the University of Virginia. It is here, amid the Blue Ridge Mountain ranges, that the President of the United States has selected a place to spend his recreational hours. From these highlands we look down upon the great valley on the one side and the beautiful Piedmont area on the other, both rich in historic interest. This can be made one of the beauty spots of America.

Youth has always answered the call to protect this country from disaster and defeat in times of war. They need to be challenged with the task of transforming the barren, ugly spots into places of living beauty. We can thus help youth to find the scheme of life while functioning in the capacity of patriots of peace. Our country church grounds should be beautified by planting shrubbery, trees and flowers. The young people's societies, with wise guidance, may have committed to them the business of making the church grounds beautiful.

SPIRITUALLY BEAUTIFUL

It is but a step from the physical beauty of the landscape to the moral beauty of the community. Our youth should be taught that the salvation of America depends upon having a sufficient number of the right kind of rural communities. These communities cannot serve the purpose of saving the people and producing a safe leadership unless they are right morally. The presence of a functioning country church is necessary to redeem the community and to keep it sound spiritually.

Our youth should be challenged to furnish a leadership which will guarantee for the nation a large number of country communities like those found in Prince Edward Island, the Canadian province where there is no divorce and no crime. The country homes and rural churches greatly impress visitors to this land of seed potatoes, silver foxes and fine cattle. It is in reality a seed plot for leadership, both for Canada and the United States. More than 100,000 American citizens were born in Prince Edward. Franklin K. Lane, the Secretary of the Interior in President Wilson's cabinet, was the embodiment of the kind of idealism that we should crave for our American youth. Lane was one of the many leaders whom this little Canadian province has furnished to our country.

One who knows Prince Edward Island well says: "I know of no other place that has a higher standard of morality and no people that take a greater pride in their homes." These results are due to the excellent country churches.

A country church with an adequate program is dependent upon having the right kind of a spiritual leadership. We must look to the youth in the countryside, the town and the city to furnish this leadership and the substance for its support.

It is important that our city youth have the right attitudes toward the country and the country people. There should be fostered among them the spirit of Margaret Wilkinson, who expresses her country-mindedness in the following lines:

Dear, when I went with you
To where the town ends,
Simple things that Christ loved—
They were our friends:
Sun-sparkle, dew-glisten,
Star-glow and shower;
Cool-flowing song at night
Where the river bends,
And the shingle croons a tune—
These were our friends.

* * * *

Day after happy day;
Many white Madonnas
We met on our way—
Farmer and longshoreman,
Fisherman and wife,
Children and laborers
Brave enough for Life,
Simple folk that Christ loved—
They were our friends. . . .

Dear, we must go again
To where the town ends. . . .

RURAL LIFE SUNDAY

The observance of Rural Life Sunday affords an opportunity to implant and foster country-mindedness in our American youth, and to inspire ideals for Christian service and leadership in the rural areas. The Home Missions Council, representing twenty-eight denominations, has approved the suggestions: first, that constituent denominations observe, where possible, the fifth Sunday after Easter as a special *Rural Life* Sunday, this to be done in such ways and by such means as the church organization and local conditions permit; second, that prayers be offered not only for the fruits of the soil but also for the husbandman himself.

The Virginia Rural Church Conference Board at its meeting in Richmond, November 27, 1929, passed a resolution requesting the churches of all denominations in Virginia to make May the Rural Church Month, and to celebrate sometime during the month a Rural Life Sunday. The Catholic and Episcopal churches have long observed Rogation Sunday.

It is befitting that Mother's Day should be chosen as home coming time for all who have gone from the country churches. This offers an opportunity not only to wear the white flower in honor of "Mother Dear" who has gone before, but to bring a floral tribute to lay upon her grave, as well as upon that of father, brother, sister or child. It can also be made a rally day for the Sunday school. The slogan should be: "Every child in the countryside present." For most denominations, rally day comes in the fall. That suits the city churches. But the best time for work in the country churches is during the summer, and we should make a special effort to enlist a full attendance and project a program in the spring. It is the beginning of "bare-foot time," winter is over, the roads have become good, and the attendance of the whole countryside should be challenged.

At the eleven o'clock hour a sermon may be preached, emphasizing some features of home life; or an address may be made setting forth the history of the local church. We are the heirs of the past and should not forget the value of our legacies.

> Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
> Lest we forget—lest we forget!

At the one o'clock hour a dinner may be served on the grounds with a social hour following.

At three o'clock an address may be given on "The Country Church," with a view of stimulating in our country people a consciousness of the importance and dignity of their task and of overcoming their inferiority complex. Materials for the address can be found in this volume.

Of course, we should not forget the past, but most of all our country churches need to catch a vision of the work of the future. Dan Crawford, who gave his splendid life to Africa, when approaching the end, said: "Hats off to the past, coats off for the future." The address of the afternoon should be in the nature of a challenge. Every country church needs the stimulus which comes from the vision of a great task. The afternoon program should be closed with a pageant put on by the young people. The following, entitled "Along the Highway of the King," is suggested. It will be noted that the pageant begins with the various discordant groups, but closes with all factions coming together and joining in the harmonious pledge for devotion of substance and life in making America the Beautiful.

A PAGEANT

"ALONG THE HIGHWAY OF THE KING"

A PAGEANT

"ALONG THE HIGHWAY OF THE KING"

Theme: The Country Church.

Musical theme: "America the Beautiful." (Played very softly, when practicable, throughout the pageant—the stanzas being sung at intervals by a concealed choir, as though from a distance.)

Cast of Characters

Graduate	Young Man
City	Young Women or Men
Town	
The Open Country	
Seer	
Country Church	

Suggestive costumes and stage settings.

Graduate—cap and gown—holds diploma in his hands. (The remaining costumes, symbolic):

City—rose tarletan, glittering ornaments and head-band.

Town—orange tarletan, red roses, and red head-band.

The Open Country—pale green tarletan with scattered clusters of flowers, a wreath of flowers on head.

Seer—flowing, soft, white robe—carries large Christian flag—head-band of gold.

Country Church—white dress or robe.

Singers in white, with floral head-bands.

Stage Settings—Stage should be bare, except for potted plants, or flowers on front to conceal footlights.

Markers for the "Roads"—City—Town—The Open Country—are made of cardboard (heavy) with lettering and arrows of gold outlined with black, and tacked to small posts wrapped in white. These should be secured to heavy baseboards to stand straight and firm.

Lights—Rose and purple.

YOUTH (Graduate):

At last, I hold within my hand this precious parchment roll, which signifies the culmination of glorious college days, the fulfillment of one of youth's bright dreams. . . . But, with this comes the realization that I have reached the crossroads of my life, and stand bewildered here, knowing not which way leads me to my goal, attainment.

There are so many roads—those

That lead us far away
Over vale and mountain
To the place where hearts may find,
Youth's eternal fountain!

Roads that lead us through the world,
Past the little places;
To the land of stranger tongues
Stranger scenes and faces.

But I would take the road,
(The Shepherd for my guide)
To where I'm needed most,
Where peace and joy abide.

Is there not one to guide me in the way that's best?

CITY:

Come, splendid youth; the shortest, brightest way leads through my alluring thoroughfares: where all of the things that youth is wont to ask are found, where every industry known to man is fostered: my myriad shops display entrancing merchandise, my marvelous and innumerable theaters provide amusement throughout the hours of the day and night.

Come, join the teeming throng that ceaselessly surges to and fro, in an endless stream adown my dazzling avenues.

The throng is one of youth who have come to me, armed with "gilded dreams and unbounded hope," from town and countryside, and hamlets small along the way; and are eagerly, hurriedly striving onward toward the goal you seek.

For some of these attainment means the height of fame, for others wealth, the dream; but there are more with noble, altruistic aims. For each of these, I provide all things needful for their progress.

And, because there comes to each of us, at times, the need of surcease from the sordid things of life, I have in countless numbers, churches—from the humblest type to the most magnificent cathedral that the mind of man has conceived—where the Word of God is preached in power and beauty, and where one may stop at any time to worship and to pray.

(Steps forward, with hands extended in pleading attitude.)

YOUTH:

Ah, City, entrancing seems indeed your path, through which I glimpse a vista of a wondrous future in the opportunity to go hand in hand with this multitude of adventurous youth.

Together we shall walk with hearts uplifted and shall find happiness, "The peace of progress," and Our Goal!

(Steps forward as if to take City's path, but halts at a signal from Town.)

TOWN:

Stay, Youth! I implore you, let not the glamour of the city lure you into perilous paths; so few who enter there e'er reach attainment's goal. Many are trampled 'neath the hurrying feet; others fall beside the way and go downward into sin and want. For, in the city, temptations are more numerous and subtle, too.

And midst turmoil and clamor, one is apt to hurry past the House of God, and glittering paths turn thoughts away from holy things. So I would have you take the path through quiet towns or peaceful hamlets where man knows man, and friend is friend indeed; and where there's room—where gardens grow.

Less of the city's glitter, but *all* of its joys are here; and here, too, churches stand, their steeples gleaming bright above the homes; and youth with dreams and aspirations "is trooping by into the threshold of life." These, together with the transient populace, for whom the town affords an adjusting medium between country and city life, will offer to you a task of thrilling importance in developing the individual and latent talent, and in directing these forces for Christian leadership at home and abroad.

Of the millions who annually migrate to the cities from the country and villages, those who are previously trained in service in the home church inevitably become religious leaders in the larger fields; but unless they take Christ with them, they seldom find Him there!

Is this not a challenge to all that is highest and best that is yours to give?

(Makes appealing motion.)

(The Open Country intercepts.)

THE OPEN COUNTRY:

I would have you hear the call of rural lands. Come! take the path through winding trails or peaceful lanes, which are better far than Town or City streets. Here is offered limitless opportunity for service to your fellow man. Along my way are isolated homes, neglected communities, where potential youth in countless numbers wait a leader's call. In many of these, genius of rarest quality lies dormant, ready to burst into fame when the portals of opportunity open, through which they may visualize and appreciate their own potentialities.

I'd have you instill a greater love for field and countryside; for rural folk, having caught the glamour of the age, are impatient of privation and solitude, and blinded by the lure of urban life, see not the glories of country lanes and homes. And the towns and cities are doomed unless the fields continue to blossom and the farms to bear.

I'd have you "set in action such movements" as will make for better homes and social order.

(Two verses of "America the Beautiful" sung by concealed choir.)

SEER:

The hope for America the Beautiful is to have the right communities, from which in future days will come, as there have in the past, leaders of our land. To you, who have been trained and qualified for leadership by your church and state, there is no more illustrious honor than to participate in the preparation of rural youth for Christian Service.

Here indeed is "high adventure, great achievement, and at last, a crown."

Can you ask more of life?

COUNTRY CHURCH:

(While music is being played softly.)

The country church is standing still,
Upon the summit of the hill,
Its bell is silent, but the breeze
That drifts among the leafy trees,
Brings music to it . . . And the flowers
That grow around it, speak of hours
When children played about its yard,
When tired hands, that life had scarred,
Were folded very gently there,
In adoration and in prayer.

The little church is standing yet . . .
And many dreams we can't forget,
Are standing with it, and the tears
And joys we knew in yesteryears
Are still a part of it . . . We know
That still it feels the after-glow
Of all the loveliness that came
To worship in His holy name.
The rural church—oh, may it stand
Still as the symbol of this land!

THE SEER:

The rural church, with doors ajar, reflecting all "the sanctities and lovely things of life," is a house of prayer and praise. If only there be preached the true evangel as a witness to Jesus Christ, radiating rays of light will shine into the homes where united families dwell, even to neighborhoods afar. America shall be the Beautiful indeed, for God shall shed his grace on her, and crown her good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

Oh, splendid Youth, do you not hear the clarion call? Prepare the way through rural lands for churches which shall ever stand as guiding posts along the Highway of the King.

YOUTH:

Readily, joyfully, I turn from the glitter of the city, from ambition's call, to rural paths. The opportunity is so great, the challenge so imperious! I fain would lift the torch of truth and guide rural youths to realize their fortune's good, and in the service of the King, lead them on and upward through His Highway to attainment's goal.

So, I would take the road
(The Shepherd for my guide)
To where I'm needed most,
Where peace and joy abide.

(Concealed choir sings "America the Beautiful.)

CITY:

I concede the wisdom of your choice, for I know well that I could not sustain my high estate if rural youth of brain and brawn should cease to come my way.

Many of my men of wealth, my captains of industry, my statesmen, my educators and religious leaders were reared 'neath the shadow of the country church.

May God speed you on the way. I pledge to share my gathered wealth in honor to my King. I dedicate rich gifts to help you in your chosen task. Go, establish country homes and communities and build houses for the worship of our gracious Lord. I long to share with you the fellowship of this adventure.

TOWN:

I would be not more selfish than the garish city, and urge you more to turn from duty's call, for town nor village could long survive if country churches should decay! Ours is a common cause; all one body we!

THE OPEN COUNTRY:

The challenge, then, with equal power comes to each of us, for none can thrive alone. So let us join our hearts in prayer, and hands in fellowship, and pledge to fortify our land with country churches, that shall ever stand as guides along the Highway of the King.

(Seer standing behind with hands in benediction. Others join hands, and say in concert):

Not alone we triumph, not alone we fall,
In each loss or triumph, lose or triumph all,
Bound by God's great purpose, in one living whole
Move we all together to the shining goal.

(Concealed choir sings "It May Not Be on the Mountain's Height" or other appropriate hymn.)

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